

MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Location: School Committee Room
May 19, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

In Attendance

George Scobie
Jessie Harrington
Gail Holloway
Dottie Kauffman - arrived at 6:35 p.m.
Meghan McCrillis

Casey Handfield
Beth Chamberland
Cecelia Wirzbicki

Jack Generelli via Zoom

REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE

CALL TO ORDER:

At 6:30 p.m. Dr. Handfield called the meeting to order and request that everyone join him in the Pledge to the Flag.

Following the opening, Dr. Handfield accepted nominations from the School Committee members for a Chairperson. Mrs. Holloway made a motion to appoint Mr. Scobie as Chairperson of the School Committee for the time period May 19, 2021 through May 17, 2022. Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Scobie then took charge of the meeting and entertained a motion for the position of Vice Chairperson. Mrs. Holloway made a motion to appoint Mrs. Harrington as Vice Chairperson of the School Committee for the time period May 26, 2021 through May 17, 2022. Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Dr. Handfield read the following from MASC:

“By statute (Chapter 71 section 36) the School Committee appoints a secretary. This is the person who is responsible for keeping the minutes of the meetings. The vast majority of School Committees use either a member of the Superintendent’s office staff or a third party secretary in this role. It is not recommended that School Committee members serve in this capacity as it is exceedingly difficult to take minutes and participate in the business of the School Committee. That being said, there are many School Committees that, by policy, appoint a member to serve as either secretary or clerk in a somewhat ceremonial role as a third officer beyond the Chair and Vice Chair. At one point, the Superintendent in regional schools was the secretary by statute (I believe that statute was repealed in the 1960s). We highly recommend that the secretary to the School Committee be either a member of the Superintendent’s office support staff or that the Committee directly hire/contract with a third party for this role.”

Based on the above, it was his recommendation that once again the Committee not appoint a member of the School Committee as Secretary, instead leaving that responsibility to Mrs. Zautner through her retirement and then to her successor thereafter.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve Mrs. Zautner and then her successor serving as the Secretary of the School Committee; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS: None

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:

Dr. Handfield recognized Marcus Longo, Class of 2021 for having achieved a National Merit Scholarship Award. He shared that all winners of Merit Scholarship awards (Merit Scholar® designees) are chosen based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments—without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, or religious preference. A variety of information is available for NMSC to evaluate: The Finalist's academic record, information about the school's curriculum and grading system, PSAT/SAT/NMSQT Selection Index score, the high school official's written recommendation, information about the student's activities and leadership, and the Finalist's own essay. There are three types of awards: National, Corporate, and College. Marcus is receiving the prestigious University of Chicago National Merit Scholarship Award where he will attend in the fall. Neither Marcus nor Mr. Delongchamp, Principal of AHS, was available to attend in person.

The Committee gave congratulations and kudos to Marcus.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES INTRODUCTION / REPORT

Aaron Zheng and Jasmyn Gates

Neither representative was able to attend the meeting.

MINUTES: 4/28/21 for approval.

Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 28th meeting; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

COVID Update

Dr. Handfield stated that he was pleased to share that our COVID numbers continue to steadily decrease in the school district. We were concerned about a small increase after April vacation, but that has not happened. He noted that we continue to monitor guidance from the CDC and DESE regarding COVID guidelines and its impact on the schools; however, this is good news.

Dr. Handfield noted that the announcement regarding not having to wear masks outside was a surprise to him but very welcome news and good timing with the warm weather we are experiencing this week.

FY '22 Budget Update

Dr. Handfield noted that on Tuesday, May 4th, we passed our FY'22 budget of \$27,988,540.45. This represents a .99% increase over last year's spring Town Meeting number of \$27,676,055 and a 2.89% increase over the special fall Town Meeting number of \$27,214,157. He shared a letter of thanks that he

had sent to our Town Meeting members for their affirmation of this year's budget as presented and he thanked our Town Administration, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, as well, for their tremendous support.

NEW BUSINESS:

Donation of Hand Sanitizer from Storz

Dr. Handfield shared that we recently received a donation of 2 cases of hand sanitizer from Mr. Gary Servideo, Facilities Manager, at Storz (Karl Storz-Endoskope) in Auburn and it was his recommendation that the Committee formally accept this donation. A thank you letter was shared.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to accept with gratitude the donation of hand sanitizer from Storz in Auburn; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Proposed Dates for 2021-2022 School Committee Meetings

Dr. Handfield shared a draft of the proposed meeting dates for the 2021-2022 school year.

Mrs. Kauffman asked that a meeting be added at the end of August, prior to school being back in session in case it was needed. The Committee agreed to add August 25th to the schedule, noting that the format will be determined closer to the meeting date.

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to accept the proposed meeting dates for the 2021-2022 school year; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Handbook Updates for Approval

Dr. Handfield provided a listing of the proposed handbook updates for each of the schools in the district for next school year. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the handbook updates as presented; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Donation from Central One Credit Union to AHS Music Program

Dr. Handfield shared that Ms. Ginny Bailey, Band Instructor at AHS, recently received a donation in the amount of \$300 from Central One Credit Union for the Music Program at AHS. It was his recommendation that the Committee accept this donation with gratitude.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to accept the donation of \$300 from Central One Credit Union for the Music Program at AHS; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Autism Program (K-3 / 4-8)

Dr. Handfield noted that he was pleased to announce that the District is creating an autism program for our students through the movement of personnel and buildings that will enhance our autism programming for students in the district. Students K-3 will be at Bryn Mawr and Pakachoag and we are moving our program at SWIS to the Middle School. This is being done to provide our students with an autism diagnosis the opportunity to lessen their transitions, stay with personnel for a longer period of time with expertise in this area, and to provide additional support to our students with moderate special needs at SWIS.

Auburn High School Commencement

Dr. Handfield shared that the Class of 2021 Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, June 4th, on Memorial field. He noted that it will look similar to last year's event which was terrific. Similar to last year, we are working with Darleen Coyle and Eileen Alexander from the Town's Office of Health and Inspectional Services to make sure we are doing this safely.

He also shared that approximately 85 students took part in the Senior Prom last Saturday, May 15th, held in the Gym and outside on the grounds. The seniors got to participate in the traditional paper drop contest and will enjoy a parade through town like last year.

Auburn High School US News and World Report Ranking

Dr. Handfield shared that we were recently notified that Auburn High School was designated as one of America's Best High Schools by US News and World Report. Auburn was ranked in the top 18% of schools in the country placing 3,288 out of almost 18,000 high schools in the country. English and math proficiency, graduation rate, AP participation, and college readiness index comprise the bulk of the scoring criteria. Congratulations to AHS on this achievement.

USDA Food Grant Extended

Dr. Handfield noted that, as the Committee was aware, the USDA has subsidized meals for students through this entire school year. He shared that we recently notified that the USDA will continue financing students' meals through the 2021-2022 school year. As we continue to recover from COVID, the USDA is committed to ensuring that families and children have access to food. We thank the USDA for this support.

Superintendent's Evaluation

Finally, before moving to the Teaching and Learning Report, Dr. Handfield noted that this evening is the opening of his evaluation with the Committee. Before you tonight is DESE's document for administrator evaluation. Similar to what you have been presented with in the past was Dr. Handfield's self-evaluation, his comments on his goals, and his comments under each of the standards. He gave a brief highlight of his thoughts on it.

Mrs. Harrington asked if the pandemic had put the brakes on the District's Strategic Plan. Dr. Handfield noted that we have not necessarily lost ground. We made great gains in technology. He noted that maybe some things have changed, such as hybrid instruction, Black Lives Matter etc. that will have to be added in.

TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:

Kindergarten and Preschool Registration

Dr. Chamberland took the opportunity to remind everyone in our audience that Kindergarten and Preschool registration for the 2021-2022 school year is open. It is critical that families enroll as soon as possible so that we can prepare for the upcoming school year. This is true as well for any families new to Auburn who will be enrolling children. Applications received will help us to better plan for the coming school year. Screening for both kindergarten and preschool has been completed for those students expected for the coming year. If families have not yet enrolled, they should reach out to Bryn Mawr School or Pakachoag School for Kindergarten information or to Central Office with questions regarding preschool.

MCAS

Dr. Chamberland shared that preparation for MCAS is underway at SWIS, AMS and AHS. All principals are working to minimize the impact this process has on the daily lives of our students while also meeting the requirements for testing set forth by DESE. We know this will be a successful process for all and we thank all of the staff and families for their support, hard work and participation.

Dr. Chamberland shared the spotlight on Brandon Burnett, an ENCORE associate who has done exceptionally well. He interviewed for and received an internship with Price Chopper and is hoping it will turn out to be a fulltime job for him. He gained work experience through RISE and EVOLVE at AHS and now ENCORE here at Central Office. He ages out of the program on June 4, 2021 when he turns 22 years old.

Dr. Chamberland also shared that we have high school students interning throughout the schools. As requested, she will share information from those internships in photos and videos at an upcoming meeting.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:

Year to Date Budget Report:

Mrs. Wirzbicki shared a Year to Date Budget report as of May 11th.

Budget Transfers:

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a list of budget transfers between the same series for the Committee's information and some between different series requiring their approval.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the transfers between series as presented; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Request of Omnibus Approval for Budget Transfers

Mrs. Wirzbicki, as has become the practice at this time of year, requested that the Committee grant Omnibus approval to make transfers – notifying them after the fact – particularly as we work to close out FY 2021. She noted that she works closely with Dr. Handfield to make such transfers.

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to approve the granting of Omnibus approval to make transfers through the close out of FY 2021; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Approval of a Revolving Account for the ENCORE Program

Mrs. Wirzbicki is requesting your approval of the establishment of a new Revolving Account to be named "ENCORE." This new account will be funded with presently being held in the "Project Enterprise - #2409" Revolving Account. To answer a member's question, this new account will be able to accept donations.

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to approve the establishment of a new Revolving Account to be named "ENCORE." Mrs. Kauffman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Bus Application for 2021-2022 School Year

Mrs. Wirzbicki noted that with the move to complete bus applications through ZippSlip at the beginning of this month of May, several hundreds of bus applications have been received and are currently being processed. She noted that from May 3rd through 19th, 540 applications have been processed from ZippSlip for a total received to date of 807. In addition, we have received approximately 200 applications through ZippSlip and are waiting to receive payment for those. They are not “complete” until payment is received.

Families can still send in hard copies of the Bus Application. Please be reminded that no matter how they are provided, they are **due by June 1st** after which time a late fee of \$100 per child will be levied.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:00 p.m., Mrs. Holloway made a motion per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (2) to enter executive session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and (3) to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union personnel, to enter Executive Session; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Ailaine Zautner
Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

Minutes from April 28th
Thank You to Storz
SC Meeting Dates for next year
Handbook Updates
Thank You to Central One Credit Union
Superintendent’s Evaluation Documents (2)
Evaluation Rubric
Year to Date Budget Report
Transfers
Memo re Omnibus Approval
Memo re Revolving Account for ENCORE