



Framingham Public Schools

Robert A. Tremblay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Adam Freudberg, Chair • Tiffanie Maskell, Vice Chair • Priscila Sousa, Clerk
Jessica Barnhill • Karen Dempsey • Geoffrey Epstein
Beverly Hugo • William LaBarge • Scott Wadland
Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor

73 Mount Wayte Avenue, Second Floor, Framingham, MA 01702
Telephone: 508-626-9121 Fax: 508-877-4240

SCHOOL COMMITTEE: OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: January 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Memorial Building-Blumer Room
150 Concord Street, Framingham

MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Adam Freudberg

PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Karen Dempsey
Geoffrey Epstein
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Priscila Sousa
Scott Wadland
Mayor Yvonne Spicer

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Nicholas Small, Student Advisory Committee Member
Lincoln Lynch

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. He noted that this meeting was being broadcast live on local cable, as well as for later playback, and on Facebook Live. He said that the committee met in executive session earlier this evening to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declared; specifically for Units A, C, S, and T; specifically for collective bargaining strategy for these four Units, inclusive

of personnel grievances by teachers filed pursuant to Article 3 of the Committee's collective bargaining agreement with the Unit A Framingham Teachers Association, as well as a grievance on a personnel issue filed by a paraprofessional pursuant to Article 5 of the Committee's collective bargaining agreement with the Unit T Framingham School Educational Support; as well as a grievance on a personnel issue filed by a custodian pursuant to Article 11 of the Committee's collective bargaining agreement with the Framingham School Custodians all pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; specifically for Percy Doe, by and through her Parents, Keith and Sheryl Doe v. Framingham Public Schools and Bureau of Special Education Appeals; for discussion of Special Education litigation matters; and for litigation between the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the Framingham Public Schools Case #01-18-1113, all pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3),(7), and for approval of Executive Session minutes pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) and G.L. c. 30A, §. 22(g)(1), specifically December 4, 2019 and December 18, 2019.

Public Comment

FTA President Christine Mulroney spoke about the recent comments that were released to the public, and said that they made reference to the fact that the problems that Framingham educators are not unique to Framingham. She spoke to the difficulty of meeting needs for growing populations of english language learners and special education students, and said although it may be happening as well in other communities they are here to advocate for their community and students. She said that there is no hidden agenda or hidden playbook, and educators are reading to work collaboratively with administration and School Committee for a resolution on these issues.

Jill Weller said she is a Framingham teacher and said that the Red for Ed movement is to raise awareness for what our students, communities, and educators need, and listed some of those needs. She said that she has dealt with student behaviors in the past and a recent one led her, in accordance with Article 18 of the Unit A contract, to inform the Superintendent that she was a target of abusive conduct from a student conducive to her employment. She said there is not a playbook, but there are students who need more support and teachers who need more resources.

Dhana Bianco said that she is a school bus driver, and for at least the past five years there has been abysmal behavior of students on the school buses. She said that drivers are being put in enormous strain, and there is a chronic lack of support with student behaviors, this is causing drivers to leave, and this can be seen with the poor attendance of drivers. She said that she has read the student and parent handbook that states that safety is a top priority, but on buses she feels this is being utterly ignored.

Brian Fanous said that he is here speaking on behalf of the Stapleton PTO about the ongoing behavior problem at Stapleton. He said they want immediate action such transferring qualified

staff to the school, to stop adding children to the school, and a need to work on community building. He said some students have been withdrawn midyear due to lack of immediacy and the forum was challenging to hear about behaviors and walk away with no answers. They feel they need to see something happen and community building needs to happen.

Laci Gentry said she is here as a parent to discuss concerns about Stapleton. She said she has kids at two elementary schools, and there are drastic inequities at Stapleton that need to be addressed quickly for the sake of students and to address teacher burnout. She said that the three main differences between the two schools are: chaos in halls (which causes stress), safety (as well as communication as she was never told of an incident where a student broke a teachers wrist and her child witnessed it), and leadership (as she says Stapleton is struggling in this area).

Sarah Shaw said that she is a parent of three children two children at Stapleton, and the children are still struggling there; classrooms are still being evacuated and children are feeling emotional effects of this. She said that her children's academic work has been disrupted, they have been physically hurt, and spoke about their experiences and how it is affecting them. She said that the school environment hasn't changed, and asked how students can heal if they continue to see traumatizing events and feel unsafe at school.

Dr. Tremblay asked to speak to the public comments regarding Stapleton, and said that the Principal Anne Diaz has made herself available at this meeting. He said that an email of updates on what has been worked on at Stapleton went out to families today and he will make that available to the public. He said that he is available and ready for another conversation with the community. He said he is putting out an offer for parents to meet with Ms. Diaz and have a conversation tonight for parents to work directly with her if they would like to. Mr. Freudbeg said Stapleton will be put on one of the next agendas and he will follow up with the PTO on which date they prefer.

Sarah McKeon said that she is a Framingham teacher, and her concerns lie with students, their families and her colleagues. She said that many of you have chosen to participate in debate on social media or behind closed doors. She said that teachers do not need playbooks, they are just educators who have hit their ceiling on accepting and continuing to do what feels wrong, and willing to take a stand for their students. She said that the educators are here for the outcome and not for the income.

Lisa Zanella said that she is deeply concerned about what she recently heard. She said that it implied that the issues that Framingham teachers have brought forward have to do with a playbook from MTA to get more money from the Student Opportunity Act, but not once have

they asked for money. She said that teachers have a long history of advocating for what students need and will continue to do so.

Colleen Gazard said she is a Framingham teacher and here to talk about the critical issues that negatively impact the district, and says that she feels that the impression of teachers has deteriorated. She said that they come to speak for the children, and to inform parents on what is actually happening in classrooms; nobody is looking for more money. She said that the School Committee is supposed to be their advocate, and the teachers are telling them their needs are not being met, and that they are doing the best they can with limited resources. She said that to then be accused of an ulterior motive is beyond challenging. She said that grievances have not increased and that grievances are reflective of a lack of respect of their contract.

Sarah Guernsey said she is a Framingham teacher and she spoke about her experience as a teacher, and how the recently released news made her feel. She said that the achievements of her students is what motivates her and what is her compensation. She said she wonders if those involved are basing opinions and views on a limited amount of stories, and invites anyone to experience her story in her math classroom. She said that along with all the great moments that happen in class, there are still legitimate concerns about safety and emotional wellbeing of students.

Kellie Spencer said that she is a Framingham teacher and there has never been any shortage of dedication or commitment from teachers who always go above and beyond. She said that is what makes the attitudes around these grievances so discouraging and disheartening; being treated as irrational or unreasonable professionals when they are simply trying to be heard. She said that district wide decisions have been made frequently that directly impact teachers work and student outcomes without first seeking input from teachers, and teachers are now being accused of seeking a higher pay day. She said if our collective goal is to improve student success we should be listening to the people on the front lines.

Gerry Bloomfield said that the last four meetings have been the most stressful of all the ones he has attended. He said that there are deep and difficult issues and not just the ones that are expressed here. He said that the School Committee must address the highest priority issues first, the routine issues last, and housekeeping low impact items should be at meeting dedicated for that issue once every two months.

Announcements from the Chair

Dr. Tremblay asked for items to be taken out of order to be responsive to public comment. He said that a private meeting became a public conversation, and the conversation was not meant to disrespect staff. He said that comments were to set context on what he heard from other

Superintendents, and to discuss that issues are not just isolated to Framingham, but not to diminish what is happening in Framingham. He said there needs to be an all hands on approach for the behaviors in the community and throughout the District. He said he has had good conversations with the FTA about working collaboratively in 2020, and hopes that it can happen. He said he has been spending many days at Stapleton, and has had meetings with FPS staff to meet with as many as who will meet with him. He said that some of the concerns with the Student Opportunity Act can also be an opportunity for collaboration with the additional funds. He said that the comment about money grabbing is regarding hearing from other communities that this is happening with the Student Opportunity Act, but has not happened within Framingham. He said that there will be workshops coming up regarding the Student Opportunity Act and he will engage the FTA in the process. He apologized for his remarks. He asked for a future agenda item to be able to give a quick level summary of the amount of spending on past five years on english language programming.

The Chair reiterated that on behalf of the School Committee he called the FTA President and apologized about any issues that the recent remarks caused. He said that on the same call they had a positive discussion about moving forward, and that the Student Opportunity Act and the budget submission to the Mayor both have the same deadline of April 1st. He said this is a near term collaboration opportunity with the FTA. He said that he spoke to the new City Council Chair George King and confirmed with him that the School Committee will continue meeting in the Blumer Room, yet there is a chance here and there that City Council may need the room and the School Committee will meet at a school. He said that the City Council Chair invited the School Committee to joint meeting on March 17th with the City Council and State Legislators at the request of Senate President Karen Spilka. Mr. Freudberg reported that he and the City Council Chair also suggested having the Fuller School Building Committee update both the City Council and School Committee in future meetings. The Chair thanked everyone with the help on the transition from the old School Committee term to the new term including Technology's Dave Heitstand and the School Committee's Executive Assistant, and thanked new members for being 100 percent compliant with OML and ethics form submissions required by the City Charter and law. He said that added to every agenda going forward is going to have information listed on how to get reasonable accommodations for members of the public, and thanked Disability Commission Member and new School Committee Member Ms. Karen Dempsey for collaborating on that. He said that there have been conversations with F-SEPAC regarding how to work with them, possible public forums, and getting the information out that there are opportunities for volunteer board positions. He said that he is pleased to announce the reestablishment of a negotiation subcommittee, now titled Unit, A, S and T Subcommittee that will include himself, Mr. Freudberg, Ms. Hugo, Mr. Wadland, and Ms. Barnhill. He acknowledged a thank you note requested by the Bilingual Department, and a recent positive news story on Framingham student Charlie Richards' perseverance.

Student Advisory Committee Presentation: Sustainability at FHS

Student Advisory Committee members Nicholas Small, Rose Bailey, and Edie Bassett presented on sustainability at the High School including survey results from students on what areas the high school is making positive impact towards sustainability and what areas need to improve on. The area where FHS was rated as having the most positive impact was recycling, and the area rated the highest for needing improvement was in paper conservation. They also spoke in more detail to some of the specific areas of sustainability within the high school including the hydroponics garden, air conditioning, cleaning products, and copy paper consumption.

Questions: Ms. Sousa asked if the high school is currently composting. Mr. Small said the Student Advisory Committee spoke to the Food Services Department who said they used to compost, but they found that the drawbacks outweigh the benefits. Mr. Epstein said one School Committee subcommittee that is under consideration is on the environment and sustainability, and it is great to get input from the students for the beginning of that effort, as well as for future decisions on the budget. He asked where the funds come from for the hydroponic garden, and if it could be expanded. Mr. Small said the gardens are self sustaining through money from lunches, and the money came from food services.

Superintendent's Update

Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Diversity, and Community Development Joseph Corazzini gave an update on equity work within the district. He said that the Equity Audit has begun and the consultants are collecting data and looking to get all perspectives. He said that he is going to be meeting this week to have staff join, or start, Lunch Infinity Groups; this is a best practice for groups that feel marginalized, and creates a safe spot for discussion and brainstorming. He said they are also creating an Equity Ambassadors Program as an extension of his office, which will build a cohort of existing staff with expertise in certain areas on how to gather and spread information across the district. He said that on a monthly basis they will brainstorm on issues of equity, which creates larger conversations, and also provides someone in each building that staff and kids can talk to. He said that this week the Faith Community Church donated over 1,000 brand new shoes to students. He said that there are increasing concerns with families coming in with minimal needs being met, and they are going to convert a room in Fuller as a resource closet to be available to all families for items that are needed. He said they are working with the Consulate in Brazil to mirror the work the district has done with teachers from Spain; looking to have DESE more involved in the process and work with teachers with their Visas. He said that upcoming items include the assistance dog policy to be referred to the committee, and the Resiliency for Life fundraiser will be held on January 25th at the Framingham Elks. He said the Parent Information Center transfer process is a hard process, they try to do due diligence with both the needs of students and the needs of schools. He said that no additional students have been transferred into Stapleton, but new entries have been added; if seats are available the district needs to place the student, especially within designated seats such as sheltered english immersion and special education seats.

Mr. Lynch said a letter went out to Durham regarding their performance and contract on **transportation**, and it has been better since then, although not at 100 percent coverage for drivers. He said that they have been working on the mobile application to track busses to be able to be rolled out on time. He said there is a Finance Subcommittee meeting tomorrow where they will be looking at data even further. Mr. Freudberg requested data at the next meeting showing the impact on bussing since the letter has been sent to Durham. Mr. Wadland said at Public Comment a member of the public spoke about the working conditions on busses with student conduct, and there is a need to figure out as a district who is in charge of making changes on how that is handled. Dr. Tremblay said that it is challenging, as they try to be restorative over punitive; they could take a stance where if students are misbehaving they are taken off the bus, but the tradeoff is that then parents may not be able to get them to school, and they may be home alone, and this also affects the chronic absenteeism rate. He said that they are working on a code of conduct that will be consistent across the district in regards to behaviors and consequences, and will involve parents and teachers. Mr. Epstein asked if there is data on disruption on busses. Mr. Lynch said incident slips are filled out and are given to the principals who also address the behaviors with the students. Mr. Epstein said they have been asking for the past month for data on busses arriving and departing for all routes and have yet to get it, there is some problem connecting the bus ID and bus number which needs to be corrected. Ms. Maskell suggested that having drivers have the same routes may help continuity and knowing the students better. Ms. Hugo asked if there is money in the current budget for monitors on busses for ones with problems, as well as is there a plan for the next budget to have additional funds for this. Mr. Lynch said that currently they have 8 bus monitors which includes one floating monitor and they target busses that have had repeat incidents. He said that they do plan to include a bit more money next year for monitors, and will be in communication with Durham and the schools with requests for monitors on certain busses.

Mr. Lynch went over the FY20 Budget Narrative and said that this year they are trying to get ahead of open purchase orders, as last year there were too many open at the end of the year. Ms. Hugo asked when reconstruction costs will be known. Mr. Lynch said that they have already factored those into the numbers in the narrative. Mr. Lynch reported on the Food Services Negative Balance reports, and noted that the schools with zeros are part of the Community Eligibility Program where students receive free lunch and free breakfast. He said that three other schools, Barbieri, McCarthy, and Brophy, receive universal free breakfast.

Mr. Lynch said that the Student Opportunity Act are only temporary numbers, the state has recommended to not use them yet as they may change. He said the biggest impact in funds will be with out of district costs. Dr. Tremblay said numbers should be available within the next five days or so, guidance has not been given yet on what is required form districts for the three year plans, but there will be workshops with the Committee, the plans will be voted on, and a final plan will be submitted to DESE in April. Mr. Freudberg said some information is available on

where the district should see proposed allocations and preliminary numbers, and the Committee needs to think about extra steps to receive input from the community and possibly have hearings on this topic. Mr. Epstein confirmed, through a question, that the Student Opportunity Act gives districts relief in other areas such as out of district transportation and Chapter 70 funding, as well as an opportunity to look at funding items to help with student achievement. Mr. Wadland confirmed through Mr. Lynch that these funds first go to the City and not directly to the school, and the City Council and Mayor decide on how it gets allocated to the school department. Mr. Lynch added that these amounts are not an addition to what districts receive, it is just an increase under the same funding formula.

Superintendent's Mid-Year Progress Report on Goals

Dr. Tremblay went over his goals: enrollment and facilities planning, Framingham High School Space Utilization Plan to include Framingham Public Schools Long-Term Facility Plan and Pre-School Research and Implementation Plan, Framingham Public Schools Strategic Plan Development, and student attendance. He noted that within the High School Space Utilization Plan they will need to be looking at the location of the Technology Department as this takes up a large space currently. Ms. Barnhill asked if this study provides an opportunity to look at available space for administration. Dr. Tremblay said he does not think the schools can take on any additional offices as there is not much office space even currently available. Mr. Epstein asked if there are server rooms in the high school, if remote servers can be looked into, and requested further information on the servers and space. Mr. Freudberg suggested that the committee be provided with two budgets and timelines relating to the construction of a new elementary school south of Route 9, one with the MSBA process and one without. He said it may be worth the investment to fast track the project, and the benefits on equity, busing, traffic, and more were at least worth being aware of before a decision to proceed one way or another is made.

Update from Strategic Initiatives and Financial Oversight Committee's (SIFOC) Members Appointed by the School Committee

The three SIFOC members appointed by the School Committee David Kiklis, Joel Francis and Darlene Umina presented on the SIFOC draft comment report. Ms. Umina said that this report is based on hearing feedback from the School Committee, City Council members, and from two public hearings, and they took the main points that were of the most importance. She said that they will be looking at the best approaches to address these problems, and may break up the initiatives in order to tackle them, likely the first one being sustainability. Mr. Kiklis said that they tried to cast the net as wide and listen to as many constituents as possible and address problems that should be in strategic plan. Mr. Freudberg said looking at the section on education in their report it looks like it aligns with what the Superintendent is also focusing on within his goals, such as addressing inequities, expansion for high quality education for all students, a plan for the future of elementary schools community-wide, and addressing concerns about bussing.

Questions. Mr. Epstein asked about a timeline for the City Strategic Plan, and how this report is incorporated. Mr. Kiklis said the City is expecting a draft of their strategic plan by November or December, and the next step is how to transform the SIFOC draft report to be included in the formal process. He said that they view their report as a process that is ongoing and evolving. There was discussion on how to best communicate and collaborate with SIFOC members with suggestions of emails being made available, members attendance at SIFOC meetings, and updates at future School Committee meetings. Mr. Francis said that there is no requirement in the Charter for this committee to receive approval on their reports from any other bodies, and it is a process that needs to be evolved and clarified on how they collaborate. Mayor Spicer noted that this draft comment report document is different from the City Strategic Plan, and three SIFOC members present are part of a collective group who worked on this document, who also work along with other public bodies besides just the School Committee.

Overview of the FPS and Policy Subcommittee's Policy Development Process

Mr. Wadland, as the Policy Subcommittee Chair from last term, reviewed the flow chart and document of the policy development process. He noted that when a policy is referred, it does not have to be an existing specific policy, it can be a referral of a topic. He said that within these charts where it notes that policies referred are drafted by administration, it is not a body into itself, the responsibility falls to Dr. Tremblay who will then bring in various stakeholders as needed. He said that referral of policies to the attorney is at the discretion of the Superintendent or Policy Chair. Ms. Hugo said the committee can also get advice from a MASC attorney or field director at no cost as part of the committee's membership.

Appointment of Warrant Signers (Policy DGA)

Mr. Epstein and Ms. Maskell spoke to the process and experience of being a warrant signer. Mr. Epstein said that they are working on a report on the process, as well as ideas on how to improve it, such as moving towards going paperless. Discussion of what is required of a backup warrant signer occurred, and Mr. Freudberg noted that as a backup he was only needed once in the past two years.

Motion: To appoint Geoff Epstein as the primary warrant signer, Tiffanie Maskell as the deputy warrant signer, and Adam Freudberg, Karen Dempsey, and William LaBarge as backup warrant signers.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill **Vote:** Unanimous
(9-0-0)

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Epstein said that warrants were signed.

Mr. Wadland said that the temporary Rules and Administration Subcommittee has met twice and gone through the entirety of the 2018 report. They have one more meeting on January 23rd, and all members will receive red lined copy of the 2018 report indicating every addition and deletion in the next meeting packet.

Approval of Minutes, Gifts, and Scholarships

Motion: To approve the January 2, 2020 Open Session minutes, with a correction to a members seat, the December 18, 2019 Executive Session minutes as approved in Executive Session with recommended redactions from the attorney, \$500 from Exxon Mobil to support the areas of Math and/or Science at Framingham High School, \$15,000 from Meditech to support the advancement of technology and technology instruction, \$501.67 donation from the Framingham High School, and the creation of an account for \$5,000 for Connor R. Neshe Scholarship.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Ms. Sousa **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mayor Spicer said that within the December 4, 2019 Executive Session minutes she is referenced many times and feels that they may be missing some parts of the conversation, and requests that this be tabled until she gets clarification. Mr. Freudberg said that the committee already approved to release certain sections of these minutes, and if they are not approved tonight they are going to be approved late. He suggests voting on these tonight, and then revisiting them by putting them on the next Executive Session agenda when the Mayor's schedule aligns. Mayor Spicer was in agreement with this.

Motion: To approve the December 4, 2019 Executive Session minutes as approved in Executive Session with recommended redactions from the attorney.

Moved: Ms. Sousa **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell **Vote:** 8-0-1

(Yes: Hugo, Dempsey, Wadland, Freudberg, Sousa, Epstein, Maskell, Barnhill. Abstained: LaBarge)

Second Round Public Comment

Robert Bolles said that we are depending on bus drivers too much to monitor student behavior, and that parents should make their kids understand the rules, as well as they should be suspended from the bus. He said that he had wanted to ask during the student presentation if the custodians are using the cleaning materials they showed. He said that the public used to be able to ask relevant questions at the time of the agenda item, and now there is a bylaw not allowing that, and he is again asking to get rid of that bylaw. He said that the budget has gotten out of control.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Mr. Epstein **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Student Advisory Committee Presentation: Sustainability at Framingham High School

FY20 YTD Budget

FY20 Budget Narrative

Food Services Negative Balance Report

Student Opportunity Act Information
Superintendent's Mid-Year Progress Report on Goals
SIFOC Draft Report
Policy Development Process Flow Chart
Policy Development Process Memo
Policy DGA
Warrants
January 2, 2020 Draft Open Session Minutes
Gift from Exxon Mobil
Gift from Meditech
Gift from Framingham High School Foundation
Connor Neshe Scholarship Forms

These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee in Open Session on February 5, 2020.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on February 10, 2020.