



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

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE: OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: March 5, 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 Chair
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Mikaele Nieves, Director of Parent Information Center

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He noted that this meeting was being recorded and will be broadcast live once the Planning Board has completed on local cable, as well as for later playback, and on Facebook Live. He said that the Committee has gone paperless so members may be using their devices during the meeting.

Public Comment

Dhana Bianco said she was here to talk about an incident of student behavior where the child began punching and biting the driver and other children. She said that the driver radioed for support, and only after twenty minutes and multiple calls for support did the Transportation Director get the police involved. She asked how drivers are expected to implement safety when they are 100% liable and have 0% authority. She said there is a code of conduct on buses, but it is not implemented and staff seem to disagree with it. She said that the drivers want real measurable changes immediately.

Nancy Clougherty said that she is a member of the FTA and here to talk about the passage of the Student Opportunity Act which is a culmination of the hard work of many to invest in students and invest in the future. She said that she hopes you listen to teachers and the FTA to help supplement rather than supplant and to continue to grow and meet the needs of students. Mr. Freudberg spoke about the forum and said more information will come on this.

Sarah Guernsey said that she is a teacher and here to talk about the FTA Professional Development Day which featured 100 workshops, including instructional strategies for students to master content, social emotional, and activities to build or deepen relationships with students. She said that the FTA wanted to give thanks to the many who helped provide such a great day to grow, learn, and connect with each other.

Gerry Bloomfield said that he is concerned that there are still behaviors on busses with all the time that is spent talking about it, and said something must be fundamentally wrong. He spoke about the history of influenza, and said that he hopes that the District has a contingency plan for Coronavirus and sanitation issues.

Announcements from the Chair

No announcements from the Chair.

Remarks from the FPS Student Advisory Committee

Student Advisory Chair Nicholas Small spoke about upcoming events: FHS first College and Career fair, SAT planning, and term three progress report will be issued on Friday.

Enrollment Updates for the Current School Year from the Parent Information Center including Coordination Between City Officials on Community Growth for FPS Enrollment Impacts

Director of the Parent Information Center Mikaele Nieves went over enrollment updates from all of the schools, comparing last year to this year, from the beginning of the school year until now, as well as a comparison to the estimates in the McKibben report of 2019. She said that Grade 1 had consistent increases throughout all of the schools. She said at Cameron they froze enrollment in Grade 7, otherwise it would have been higher. She said that the kindergarten registration for next year has started and is already one student higher than the full enrollment last year, which means it looks like it will be higher. She said that enrollments continue to increase which means there will be a need for more supports.

*Mayor Spicer arrived at 7:25 p.m.

She said there was an increase in the number of students from October 1st forward that were born in Brazil and there are 69 different countries represented within the schools. Members discussed the need for reports to focus on what is in the committee's purview, such as budget and policy. Mr. Epstein asked for the demographic info that was referenced be shared, and a detailed report of all class sizes for every school. He asked how close to the McKibben estimates we are, and asked how to plan for capacity and budget implications. Dr. Tremblay said they meet and talk about the enrollment number often. He said that McKibben estimate was within 2% of the actual enrollment, which was the consultant's margin of error, and they have scheduled for another presentation in May which will also give the demographer's thoughts on why the forecasted estimate and actual enrollment do not exactly match. He added that the Parent Information Center does watch the enrollment to make sure to meet certain contractual language, such as opening a classroom or bringing in an assistant. He said the implications of enrollment can be seen within the budget. Ms. Barnhill said there is a concern about increased population with new apartments being built, and asked if there was any data that could be provided for what this may look like future student enrollment. Dr. Tremblay said he was working with Amanda Loomis at the City, and can follow up with her replacement for what occupancy looks like, and for what is currently available for rent. Ms. Hugo asked if there is a need for more special education services, does the current increases also increase the poverty rate, and if there are any budget implications. Ms. Nieves said that needs have changed and have increased for families, more needs for support and it is very visible to the point of families having little to nothing. She said that she has not seen a need for an increase in special education, but there is an increase in needs for ELL services, basic needs, and supports, and helping families with trauma.

Mr. Freudberg said that within the Rules and Administration Report it recommends having coordination with City Officials, including regarding community growth. Dr. Tremblay said he has been working with the City and was given a tour of some of the projects, he will continue to ask for them to provide what kind of apartments are available to rent, if some are already occupied, and what that means for enrollment. He said that the amount of children coming from Brazil is a challenge due to different summer timing and vacations; students withdrawing and then re-enrolling. Mayor Spicer said she has visited the new developments and perspective of who is coming to live there; she said there are not many children, and is not seeing a tremendous impact. She said that Keefe Tech enrollment has gone up largely due to Framingham students, which will affect Framingham Public Schools enrollment. Mr. Wadland said a lot of these topics should be discussed within the Building and Grounds subcommittee, as it's within their domain. Mr. Epstein said data analytics on enrollment should be put on the website, and the committee to continuously be updated for budgetary reasons. Mr. Freudberg said that it should also be shared with the Planning and Zoning Boards so they can help plan and work together with FPS on any new proposals early in the process to better coordinate on enrollment impacts.

FY21 Budget Discussions

Executive Director of Finance Lincoln Lynch presented on the FY21 Budget including the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) and budget implications. Mr. Freudberg said that next Friday March 13th is when the draft SOA plan and the next budget book iteration will go online. He

added that the deadline to submit the plan to DESE is April 1st, and it can be voted on that day at the Open Session.

Discussion. Members expressed their concern that the draft budget is assuming no local contribution and how this affects what the SOA is supposed to be used for, as well as is ignoring the costs of inflation. They noted that the SOA is supposed to go towards helping English Language Learners and low incomes students, and it should not change local contribution. Mr. Lynch said that this is the understanding he got from the City, that the SOA funds are the local contribution, and he was being fiscally conservative. He said that he can add in inflation, which would then leave more funds for SOA. Mr. Epstein shared a spreadsheet he created showing the history of local contribution. and Chapter 70 funds. Ms. Barnhill said kids who have not attended preschool need high quality universal Pre-K, and asked if there are items for this included in the budget. Mr. Lynch said there are some items in the budget this year that will carry over to next year. Dr. Tremblay spoke about how the District has already been working on all the items SOA addresses, such as social emotional and Pre-K. Ms. Maskell asked for Mayor Spicer’s input. Mayor Spicer said that this is Mr. Lynch’s recommendation and is an ongoing conversation. She said that not all that is being said is accurate, and the need is to fund all aspects of the City. Mr. Freudberg said that it would be helpful to know what the potential growth of new revenue for the City is, what would the potential for new money for the schools, and information on priority items that are no longer included in the budget. He asked the Mayor if the CFO could attend the next meeting.

Mr. Freudberg said that future exploration of municipalities departmental efficiency is Article X of the City Charter and the City CFO has started to explore this at very high levels, as he learned by viewing a recent City Council Finance Subcommittee meeting. He said that there is no action required as of now, there is a need to take time and have these concepts be developed thoughtfully. He said that it would be looking to see if merging certain departments that the school may have that other municipal departments also have. He said that the CFO told the Finance Subcommittee about a possible study being done by UMass. He said that when the time comes any reorganization proposal will require a School Committee vote, a City Council vote, and Mayor approval.

Mr. Epstein said that the Finance and Operations subcommittee has provided their recommendations on the School Committee department specific budget, and went over every item. He said that they unanimously approved to increase the Executive Assistant's salary by 3% in the FY21 fiscal year based on her role being expanded immediately for subcommittee minutes. He added that the transcriptions have not been reliable, and having the Executive Assistant create the minutes instead will be saving money, as well as saving subcommittee chairs’ time. He added that the role of that position will also be expanding within website management and Excel data.

Motion: To adopt all of the Finance and Operations subcommittee recommendations regarding FY20 management, FY21 recommendations to be included in the budget book, and a 3% increase in salary for the Executive Assistant.

Moved: Ms.Maskell

Seconded: Mr. Epstein

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mr. Lynch said that currently Thayer and Woodrow Wilson are part of the Community Eligibility Program, they are looking to see if other schools can also participate, but need more information and likely will not know until April. Mr. Freudberg asked if there should be any money held for items that are needed after the Equity Audit is completed, as it will be completed after the budget is approved. He said he is pleased with the turnover risk within the budget for this specific fiscal year, but wonders how long it will continue to remain at the level it is.

Additional Public Comment Opportunity on the Student Opportunity Act

No public comment.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Tremblay recognized the FTA and the Office of Teaching and Learning for the recent Professional Development Day. He said that there was a community reading day at McCarthy with elected officials. For the student achievement update he said that the winter diagnostics window has closed for I-Ready, which they use as a baseline for direct correlation to MCAS in grades 1-8, and all grades were able to increase the percentage of students in Tier 1 and a reduction in the percentage of students in Tier 3, in both reading and math. He said that this will be talked about more in the Teaching and Learning subcommittee. He gave an update from the Student Advisory Committee report including that they are looking to incorporate multiple layers of sustainable supervision including technology and adult supervision in the bathrooms in the high school. He said that he will give more updates on the electronic solutions on monitoring where students are. He said that Principal Banach has formed a committee that is looking at alternative school schedules to include a flex block which would foster positive relationship building by allowing students to interact and engage with adults in a different way; such as an activity of their choosing like yoga, extra help, or new skill building.

He said that the Coronavirus message went out today and there are resources on the website, with help from the Mayor's team, the Director of Public Health and the Health and Wellness Department. He said that there is a Commissioner of DESE conference call with the Department of Public Health with all superintendents to receive more information. He said that within the district they are looking at international trips that have to be cancelled with the Governor's recommendation. He said that the challenge is that parents have already paid for trips, so they are pushing to see what can be done to mitigate that and get a refund and not a voucher. He said that in regards to schools closing the challenge is the requirement of 180 days of school, to not go past June. He said they are hoping to learn if the state would allow for electronic learning from home, and they have proactively purchased enough devices to go one to one as of today. He said that some families may not have internet access at home, so also have a way to provide hot spots to those families. He said some problems that could come up if electronic learning was allowed would be possible impacts to bargaining, inability to provide IEP services, and families may also have problems with childcare.

Mr. Lynch said that at last night's City Council meeting they rejected the proposed five year lease of Perini for the Central Office. He said that they are now looking to negotiate for the current lease, after getting confirmation from the Inspector General's Office that this is

allowed. He said that they are looking to negotiate the years on the lease, but is not confident if Perini would be open to negotiating the dollar amount. He said he is also working on a new RFP with the City Solicitor and the City's Procurement Office, and is hoping to get a draft out to the School Committee, Superintendent, Mayor and City Council for review before it goes out.

Mr. Lynch said that the FY20 budget is currently projected to end the year with a surplus of \$1.4 million which is 1.01% of the budget. He said that they are having conversations with each department and school on their plans on spending, and if they are not going to spend their full budget it can be allocated to other areas. Mr. Lynch said any surplus will be recommended to be reclassified from expenses to the Circuit Breaker account, which is able to be carried over to the next year to offset the budget. Mr. Freudberg confirmed that the Circuit Breaker funds that were carried over from last year have already been spent. Mr. Epstein asked for the timelines for the Circuit Breaker reimbursement. Mr. Lynch said that it is quarterly, and at the end of the year it is determined if there will be more within the fourth quarter payment. He said that he can get the dates and share them. Mr. Epstein said that the state recommendation is to keep a reserve of \$5-6 million, and districts should be building that reserve at every opportunity to carry forward into the next year due to the uncertainty of special needs out of district spending. He suggested that within the budget book it detail how this is state guidance. Ms. Hugo asked if the retroactive bill for reconstruction for out of district schools that is given at the end of the fiscal year comes out of the Circuit Breaker account and if the amount to be expected has been given yet. Mr. Lynch said that it is factored within the budget, and depending on what the funding source is, it could come out of the operating budget in the tuition lines or out of the Circuit Breaker. He said that he will get the expected amount and share.

Mayors Report

Mayor Spicer said that she has been talking with the Department of Public Health constantly about coronavirus preparedness, and will also be on a national conference call to look at what is happening nationally. She added that reports are posted regularly on the City website. She said that the Boards and Commissions have appointed over 300 people over the last several years, and it is one of the most diverse representation that has ever been had within Framingham's Boards and Commissions. She said that they currently have 11 vacancies total. She said that the second cohort of the Government Academy has been posted and applications are being accepted. She said that the City is doing zero based budgeting and meeting with all department heads and looking at ways to be as efficient as we can, while also realizing things we have not been doing in the past that are needed, such as the stormwater management requirement.

She said that she hopes that the City can still purchase the Perini building, this is currently with the Council's Finance subcommittee. She said that this would solve a multitude of challenges and provide opportunities in the Memorial Building that are not available currently.

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Epstein said that he signed one warrant. He said that there is a joint meeting with the Finance and Operations subcommittee and the City Council's Finance Subcommittee next Tuesday to discuss the school FY21 budget.

Ms. Maskell said that there are three policies to be referred to the Policy Subcommittee and would like to take them as a consent agenda. No objection.

Motion: To refer policies IHBG: Home Schooling, IMG: Animals in School, and JFAB: Admission of Non-Resident Students to the Policy Subcommittee.

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

Motion: To approve the first reading of Policy JICFB: Bullying Prevention.

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

Ms. Hugo said that the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee has set the schedule for the rest of the year, with the first meeting being on March 30th at 6:00.

Mr. Epstein said that the Executive Assistant has been drafting a document with a short meeting summary before subcommittee minutes are completed, so everyone within a day or two knows of the action items that subcommittees are working on.

City Council Proposed Bylaw

Mr. Freudberg said that City Councilor Adam Steiner has been working on the proposed bylaw Article I, Section 5.3 and 5.5 to prevent individuals from simultaneously holding multiple elected and appointed offices to expand to all elected officials. He said at this time no action is required, unless requested, it is just to give notice to the committee. No comments were made on this bylaw.

Approval of Minutes, Gifts, and Scholarships

Motion: To approve the February 26, 2020 Open Session minutes.

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

Mr. Freudberg said that the next meeting will be on Tuesday March 17 and is a joint meeting with State Legislators and City Council. He asked that members give questions to legislators ahead of time. He said that the Annual Public Budget hearing will be on March 18th.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:38 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Enrollment Updates from the Parent Information Center

FY21 Budget Presentation

School Committee Department Budget Overview-Updated Draft

Mr. Epstein's Spreadsheet in Year to Year Budget History

Press Releases Regarding Coronavirus

FY20 Budget Narrative and YTD

Food Services Statistics

Warrants

Policy Summary

Draft Policy JICFB: Bullying Prevention Proposal
City Council Review of Proposed Bylaw Amendment Article 1, Section 5.3 and 5.5
February 26, 2020 Open Session Draft Minutes

These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee in Open Session on April 1, 2020.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on April 8, 2020.