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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: April 1, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Remote

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
Anne Ludes, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Amy Bright, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education

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Ann Mariano, Director of Technology
Judy Styer, Director of Health and Wellness
Genoveffa Grieci, Director of Bilingual Education
Laura Spear, Director of Special Education
Joanna Hastry, Executive Assistant for the School Committee

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He noted that this meeting was being held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, and announced who is in attendance. He asked for a moment of silence to pause and reflect on those who are suffering in our community, nation, and the world. He said that the meeting is being broadcast live on The Government Channel, and can be viewed Live on Facebook on the Framingham Public Schools Facebook Page. He noted information on how to participate in public comment through emails sent before and during the meeting and through Zoom. He said that Facebook comments will be reviewed, but likely not responded to in real time since there is now a voice option for public comment. He said that the agenda item on the Student Opportunity Act will be postponed as the states extending the due date due to the Coronavirus.

Superintendent's Update

Coronavirus. Dr. Tremblay said we are effectively reinventing education by the hour and is grateful to the Committee, his team, the FTA, community partners, students, and parents. He said that since the last meeting the Governor extended school closures from April until May 4th. Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch said that the Food Services Department has been essential in the food distribution to provide meals to families every day at Fuller, Cameron, Wilson and Barbieri from 10-1. He said that they gave out 2,800 breakfast and lunches combined last week; about 200 a day at Wilson and 110 a day at Fuller, Cameron, and Barbieri. He said that families drive and walk up, and staff have masks and gloves and are serving the food on lunch trays. Dr. Tremblay thanked the DPW for providing signage.

Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Anne Ludes said that after the Governor extended school closures, DESE gave guidance with their recommendations for remote learning plans, which is up to each individual school and district to make decisions that are appropriate for them. She said that throughout the guidance it was clear that equity should be in consideration. She said that the guidance included having school staff make multiple interactions with students weekly, to adopt a remote learning model to start in early April, to engage students in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a school day, to focus on reinforcing skills already taught this school year and applying and deepening those skills, for opportunities for physical components and enrichment when possible in areas like the arts, and for teachers to be required to give feedback on student work when appropriate with grading not being recommended. She said that we also need to make sure we are thinking of students having equitable access; not just technology, disabilities, and language, but also health and other factors during these challenging times.

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She said that the plan that Framingham has created was a joint collaboration between district leaders and the FTA. The remote learning plan for Framingham includes: teacher initiated outreach two times a week, as well as three hours of remote office hours, weekly calendars that are posted by Monday morning each week broken down by school and grade level at elementary level, by grade at middle school level, and at high school will be broken down by department for all core classes. She said that the calendars will include a lot of choices, including no technology options, and are also translated into Spanish and Portuguese. She said that no student will be penalized for not having access to the work, and they are working on ways to incentivize students. Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Ms. Bright said that they created a list of programs that are on the enrichment platforms and made sure they are vetted, that students are familiar with them, they are free and provide privacy for students. She said they were thinking about how each assignment will be affected by what a student has at home, and language and math coaches worked on templates to create a sense of alignment, so students are not going to three different places for information. Ms. Ludes said at the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee it was discussed how many are asking questions of other districts moving curriculum forward, and Framingham not. She said that if you look closely, a lot of districts are not moving the curriculum forward, and we needed to look through the equity lens for what is appropriate for Framingham, and what students are able to access. She said that it is a moral and logistical decision, and if we were to advance the curriculum there would be a significant amount of the population who would for multiple reasons not be able to keep up. She said that with this plan, students have the opportunity to deepen and reinforce skills, setting up for greater success next year.

Director of Health and Wellness Judy Styer said that we have to keep at the forefront that all staff and families are having a hard time, and that students can't learn if they are not feeling safe or cared for. She said that they are working hard to find best ways to support teachers and administration in the work they're doing, and for families who are figuring out how to get through each day. She said that they created a document on protocols for providing communication with families, created a safety protocol in the event that there are significant issues beyond basic needs and how staff respond, such as a safety issue, and created a family resource guide for support staff to reference. She said that they are in the process of creating a document for support teams on tiered interventions and expect to provide it for all students.

Director of Technology Ann Mariano said that on the first weekend of chromebook distribution 2,100 chromebooks were given out to families. She said that there are still needs in the community, and principals and teachers are reaching out to families and they then reach out to technology department for follow up. She said that for safety reasons they are now doing a mail system, and have mailed over 300 to families, and will continue the process going forward. She said that the website has information on how to log in and start working on the chromebooks. She said that the district originally ordered 75 hot spots, and then another 320 for every family that reported that they don't have internet; they are still waiting for them as the supply chain is backed up. Dr. Tremblay said information also went out to families on affordable internet access. He said that they also have to think about if kids do not have access to their computer at home, due to a parent working, increased bandwidth with everyone at home, or families with multiple children. Ms. Mariano said that the quantity of chromebooks is

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not a problem at this point, shipping may not be as fast, but need safety with staff not going into buildings. Ms. Maskell said that at the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting they discussed, and made a motion, for the need for every child to have a chromebook that needs one in order to make the remote learning plan equitable.

Motion: To direct the district to provide chromebooks to every child that is in need.

Moved: Ms. Maskell **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo

Discussion: Members discussed it needing to be 1:1 or it is not equitable, for parents to reach out to principals if they are in need of a chromebook, how families are being reached out to, and having the messaging be changed so families know that more than one chromebook per family is available.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

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

Dr. Tremblay said that he will look into a phone line for access to school services, such as the City has, at the suggestion of Ms. Dempsey. Mr. Epstein asked if parents have access to students' information, and suggested that there possibly be weekly surveys in order to get feedback from parents and students as to how this is working. Ms. Ludes said that teachers are all collaborating to reinforce the same skills, so teachers next fall know what was reinforced, and what standards were not reached due to school closures. She said that families will have access to the learning plans, and have not received feedback yet, as it has not been launched yet, and will be launched on April 6th.

Director of Special Education Laura Spear said that guidelines were given from the Department of Special Education when the closure was extended, in order to make every effort and attempt to provide special education services as possible, with flexibility in what the services are. She said that there are over 2,000 students who receive special education services in the district, and with a wide variety of needs within that. She said that there are a significant amount of students who have extensive complicated needs, and some require physical face to face intervention, she said they are providing as much consultation as they can for them during this time. She said that they have developed four subgroups to work on what this will look like, with a representative group of staff. She said that they have worked on a general outline that will be sent to staff tomorrow, and will continue to be worked on and changed. She said that teletherapy has lots of regulations: ten hours of training for speech therapy and the student has to have some training on what it looks like. She said that we are not calling what we are doing teletherapy, but may be virtual sessions to review what has been worked on with students. She said that even if IEPs are expired it is still valid until the new IEP is written and accepted, and they are looking at protocols and procedures for virtual IEP meetings. She said that there are about 220 students in out of district placements, and they are getting our messages, as well as those schools are working on remote learning plans just as we are.

Director of Bilingual Education Genoveffa Grieci said that they have been collaborating with other districts, as well as connecting with students and families, and there is currently no guidance from DESE yet, but a guidance document is in the process of being developed. She said that in the absence of guidance, administrators, language development coaches, and teachers have developed a comprehensive list of resources and suggestions available on the website for English Language Learners (ELL), Dual Language programs, and Sheltered English

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Immersion (SEI) programs, with the goal to keep all students engaged in learning. She said that the remote learning plan has taken into account different language tasks for students. She said that they are collaborating with the Teaching and Learning to publish videos in three languages to support families accessing and understanding the plan instead of just reading about it. In response to a question from Ms. Dempsey, she said that 26 percent of our students, 2,100 students, are English Language Learners. Ms. Sousa asked for information on preparing for higher education, such as the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam, and if there has been any diminishing enthusiasm from the students regarding higher education. Ms. Grieci said that this has been impacted quite a bit, their goal is to get students to graduate, and have spent a lot of time advocating for students to apply to college and making sure they have all of their assessments in place. She said that the TOEFL is not one a lot of colleges ask for, and is more for international colleges. She said the dropout rate is concerning, but counselors and coaches are working with students to make sure a plan is in place for post high school graduation, they could always have more support.

Mr. Lynch said the district is paying all hourly and salary staff, but not paying overtime. He said that this could also be part of a larger than anticipated available balance at the end of the year, with items such as \$100,000 in the custodians overtime, and \$70-80,000 for spring coaches if school is not open at that point. He said the last projection was an available balance of \$1.4 million, but has potential to be much higher, and they are keeping track of expenses and will be doing a new projection based on what we are doing now, with hopefully a more solid number at the next meeting. He said that there are no day to day expenses, such as when students were in school, and most of the current expenses are dealing with COVID; such as WiFi hot spots. He said that they are negotiating with Durham to take the daily bus rate of \$30,000 a day and backing out the fuel costs per day, which would be a \$1,500 per day savings. He said that state revenues are decreasing, and going to see that impact in the FY21 first quarter, and do not know what the projection for state revenues, the Student Opportunity Act and Chapter 70 funds are going to look like. He said hopefully the available balance this year will help us in FY21 by utilizing those funds. He said the current hiring now is for staff that will directly impact student's remote learning, but for the most part not approving any hires.

Mr. Freudberg said that the Fuller Building Project is still on time and ongoing as part of the Governor's exemption, yet the School Building Committee is closely monitoring public health compliance. The SBC is meeting monthly, and so far there is no effect on the supply chain, as the contractor received items well in advance. He said that the Board of Health and City's Chief Operating Officer are making sure proper health steps are being followed. He said that the next SBC meeting is on Monday, April 13th at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Wadland said they have begun planning the Topping Off Ceremony, which is when the completion of the metal frame will be done, possibly in mid May, and whether it is virtual or in person they want everyone to be able to celebrate.

Public Comment

Scott Prusinoski said that he is wondering if schools do not go back on May 4th if Framingham is going to look to move curriculum forward, or pausing where we are, and would it be difficult to make up the months missed.

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Dr. Tremblay said that the plan still is to come back on May 4th, and need the Governor's guidance on if that will be changed. He said that the DESE first released guidance for districts to only provide resources to families, and if other districts were doing more, it would cause equity problems. He said that when the school closures were extended, the guidance was then for remote learning possibilities. Dr. Tremblay said that the deepening of knowledge is an important point, and broadening the knowledge sets students up for opportunities to align vertically and horizontally, and they will continue to evaluate.

FTA President Christine Mulrone submitted a letter and read it into the record. Her letter was regarding how administration has worked hard on working with teachers and FTA for families on food security, and remote learning, etc. She said that she fully supports the proposed budget that gets at the much more needed to support student success.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair thanked all paraprofessionals for Paraprofessionals Appreciation Day.

Vote on the FY21 Budget Recommendations

Mr. Lynch said that the proposed budget increase and Student Opportunity Act plan of 6.4% was put together with collaboration, but now not knowing what revenues will be next year should expect this number to change, and this factor is included within the budget book. He said he will continue to work with Mayor Spicer and the City's Chief Financial Officer to keep track of what is going on for projections for revenues for next year. He said that he is not fully confident that the District is going to receive all of the expected Student Opportunity Act (SOA) or Chapter 70 funds as originally anticipated. Mr. Freudberg spoke about how this crisis affected the FY20 budget, as well it could also affect the FY21 budget; with possible new needs for social emotional, technology, food security, and remediation due to loss of learning and long term closures. He spoke to the community coming together and how, as Ms. Maskell mentioned at the last meeting, it has never been more clear how important schools are, and the need to support them. Mr. Epstein said that at the last Finance and Operations Subcommittee it was discussed how these are very uncertain times, but postponing the vote on the budget would not make much difference, as the city, state, and federal revenues and funds will still not be known for some time. He spoke about city and federal funds that could possibly be used for schools, such as stabilization funds, the fact that this will be a work in progress, and the need to protect the workforce and continue to further student achievement with this budget.

Motion: The School Committee approves the [FY21] budget with the 6.4 percent increase (an increase of \$8,865,948 for a total budget amount of \$147,350,934) with the understanding that much may change over the next several months regarding federal aid, state aid, local revenue estimates, FY20 end of year projections, use of local reserves, and after all of those uncertainties are settled a different increase may well be revisited for approval.

Moved: Mr. Epstein **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill

Discussion. Ms. Hugo suggested keeping in close contact with State Legislators and the Senate President. Mr. Freudberg said that based on the City Charter, there is a need to act tonight to submit the budget to the Mayor. He said that the deadline for the form for the SOA will be

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extended by DESE, and will be voted on at a future meeting, with the current amounts in the budget book as a placeholder.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

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

Mr. Freudberg said that we will continue to work with the Mayor, CFO, and her team on this. Mayor Spicer said there will have to be some changes.

Public Hearing on Interdistrict School Choice

No public comment on this agenda item.

Dr. Tremblay said that this is different from the District's elementary school choice process, and it is the Commonwealth's interdistrict school choice program designed to allow students to attend from out of district. His recommendation is to not participate, as has been past practice, due to enrollment concerns.

Motion: To concur with Superintendent's Recommendation to not participate in the InterDistrict School Choice Program per Policy JFBB.

Moved: Ms. Sousa **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous

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

TEC Collaborative

As the TEC Collaborative liaison, Ms. Hugo said that a vote is needed to approve a modified collaborative agreement to amend language to include the newest member municipality of Medway. She said that if approved, this would start July 1, 2020, and would reduce expenses for the other districts; such as the dues would reduce down to around \$900. She said that the TEC Board of Directors voted unanimously on this.

Motion: To agree with the modified collaborative agreement to allow the new town of Medway to join the TEC Collaborative.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Mr. Epstein **Vote:** Unanimous

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

Remarks from the FPS Student Advisory Committee

Student Advisory Chair Nicholas Small gave an update focusing on the social aspect of students lives right now. He added that Flyer News is still holding remote sessions and the link was in Ms. Banach's most recent update.

Mayor's Update

Mayor Spicer said that there are continuous press releases and emails on a regular basis to try and keep the community updated. She said there is no playbook or road map on the Coronavirus, but there are a lot of engaged people who are learning from each other and best practices. She said that she wanted to re-emphasize that one thing we can do to slow the virus down is social distancing; they took down park swings and put up signage. She said that we also need to think about mental health as well as physical health. She spoke about the food and housing security programs that are available and are continuing to help. She asked for and led a moment of silence for Deputy Chief Brad Smith, a firefighter that passed away today.

Subcommittee Reports

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Mr. Epstein said that warrants were approved.

Ms. Hugo said that the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee met on Monday regarding a detailed Phase 2 of the remote learning and curriculum plan. She said that the next meeting is on Monday the 13th.

Ms. Maskell said that the next Policy Subcommittee meeting is on Monday at 4:00. Mr. Freudberg said that MASC sent out guidance for policies to look at during this pandemic, for any policies that should be suspended, or are not relevant, during this time. He said that the committee's Executive Assistant is working on internal procedures and a policy could be looked into for that as well.

Ms. Sousa said that the Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee was in the process of figuring out a date and establishing an agenda before the pandemic took precedence. She said that the Equity Audit is continuing and have started their focus group interviews, which she has already participated in.

Mr. Freudberg said that the long term agenda will still be followed as planned. Dr. Tremblay will present on the annual plan on the condition of schools, his goals and long term planning, the RFP on Hemenway, elementary, and high school space needs, and the TBA architect will be presenting as well.

Approval of Minutes and Scholarships

Mr. Freudberg said that the March 18th minutes were just distributed today if members need more time. Ms. Sousa requested more time.

Motion: To approve the March 5, 2020 Open Session minutes and the Barbieri Two Way scholarship

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Sousa **Vote:** Unanimous

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

Public Comment

No additional public comment. Mr. Freudberg thanked Director of Communications Rochelle Santos and Dr. Tremblay for responding to Facebook comments received during the meeting online.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge

Seconded: Ms. Hugo

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

DESE Recommendation on Remote Learning

Special Education Newsletter

Public Comment Submission by FTA President Christine Mulroney

FY21 Draft Budget Book

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FY21 Draft Line by Line Budget
Inter-District School Choice Memo
TEC Collaborative Charter Change Ratification
Warrants
Draft March 5 and March 18, 2020 Open Session Minutes
Barbieri Two-Way Academic Scholarship
Budget Submission Letter to the Mayor
FY21 FPS Budget Book Final