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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 15, 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: Nicholas Small, Student Advisory Chair
Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Joseph Corazinni, Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Diversity,
and Community Development

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Anne Ludes, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Amy Bright, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
Justin Humphreys, TBA Architects
Annika Ripps, TBA Architects
Carolyn Banach, Principal of Framingham High School
Matthew Torti, Director of Building and Grounds
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 those in attendance. 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 a live voice option for public comment. He noted that the School Committee met earlier in Executive Session for approval of Executive Session minutes pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(7) and G.L. c. 30A, s. 22(g)(1), specifically February 5, 2020 and February 12, 2020 and 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 pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3); specifically for Units A, B, C, S, N, and T. He added that during this meeting two separate MOA addendums for remote learning for the FTA and FAA were approved. He asked for a moment of silence to pause and reflect on those who are suffering in our community, nation, and the world.

Coronavirus

Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Diversity and Community Development Joseph Corazzinni said that they are working with community partners and are seeing a bigger food turnout; 180 families on the district side. He spoke about the other food services being provided by community partners such as Daniel's Table, the United Way, A Place to Turn, and SMOC among others. He said there are also a lot of needs for toiletry items and translation services. He said that all of these services are in addition to the meals being provided by the Food Services Department. Dr. Tremblay said that he is involved in a phone meeting every morning with the Mayor and division heads to discuss everything going on in the City and efforts of support for COVID-19. Dr. Tremblay said that we are in week two of the remote learning plan, and learning will continue next week during the usual April vacation week, except for on the Monday holiday, with the last day of school now being June 24th instead of June 18th based on the School Committee vote on Monday. He said that there has been no update from the commissioner regarding schools reopening, so the state's plan until changed is still for May 4, 2020.

Mr. Epstein asked if the staff who have to go into the buildings have enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Mr. Lynch said that the Accounts Payable Department comes in every other week and wear masks and gloves while in Perini, and the Director of Safety and

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Security and Director of Buildings and Grounds are the only ones checking on buildings with two other staff. He said that they really do not let others in the building, and when they do they have PPE on and abide by social distancing and CDC guidelines. He added, in response to a question from Ms. Maskell, that the food services staff are also all using PPE and social distancing guidelines. Mr. Epstein asked if there is any way to track students' attendance and engagement with remote learning. Dr. Tremblay said it is difficult to even ensure what engagement is, as the best way is individual to each student. He said that in the future the district will have to accommodate for all the students that are not engaging. Ms. Dempsey asked about staff reaching out to all students, and staff calling with blocked numbers using their personal phones. Framingham High School Principal Banach said that staff leave a voicemail saying they will be calling back and who it is, and they also note what students they do not get a hold of in a spreadsheet so they can see what students they are not able to reach and if there are any patterns.

Public Comment

Gerry Bloomfield said that with a now projected 4 billion dollar deficit and retail off by 9 percent just in March, and with Framingham having the median lowest income in MetroWest, with all that and much he asks to tell the residents what exactly our Governor, State, and Federal representatives have specifically told for what Framingham is to expect for new state revenue. He said that there should be a contingency operations budget based on collective knowledge and to state our assumptions.

Tilia Jacobs said that she is the head of the Framingham Chapter of Start School Later Organization and would like to propose moving Framingham High School's start time to a 9:00 start time when schools reopen. She said that this could be done either by flipping the start time with elementary schools, or by securing funding for later busses for high school. She said that the current start is misaligned with teenager's circadian rhythms which leads to poor concentration, mental health issues, depression, car accidents, among other negative items. She said that although she knows many are not thinking about it now with the pandemic, to do nothing in this case is to do great harm.

Robert Bolles said that he wants to thank Dr. Tremblay and the Mayor on how they are handling this major crisis at this point, and hopes the good work keeps up.

FTA President Christine Mulrone said that she is speaking on behalf of the FTA Executive Board and wants to support the schools and committee on sending the FY21 budget to the mayor to fully address enrollment growth and needs. She said there is a need for these resources to be successful. She said that they are aware that the nature of the current crisis will shape future budgetary conversations, but all share the same common goal in terms of student needs. She is concerned with what she heard in the City Finance Subcommittee regarding a blanket statement regarding hiring freezes. She said in order to support social emotional, Special Education, and English Language Learners needs the need for staff and support are non-negotiable. She said that these needs will not diminish, and in fact will need even more support when students are returned to traditional learning. She encouraged all citizens,

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parents, educators, and the community to reach out to their City Council representative and demand a more transparent City Budget decision process.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Freudberg said a presentation of the annual conditions of schools is a DESE requirement, and gives a snapshot on what may need to be done in the decade plus ahead. Director of Building and Grounds Matt Torti presented on the conditions of all the schools and long term facilities plan. Ms. Sousa asked if there was a plan to make a sidewalk at King Elementary School as it seems to be a safety hazard to not have one. Mr. Torti said that they are looking to do so through ADA capital funds, hopefully this summer. Mr. Epstein commented on the long term problem in deferred maintenance, and made a suggestion at looking at the funding capacity to complete projects and looking at solar projects before tax credits disappear, among other items to keep in mind for the importance of making sure projects are still completed. Ms. Dempsey asked if MassBay has completed any ADA compliance projects while they have occupied Farley. Mr. Torti said that they have done very little, they are looking at cost and design implications will be for conversion of bathrooms, and if any construction is done they will have to also make sure it is ADA and fire compliant, such as putting in sprinklers.

Dr. Tremblay spoke to his goal of Preschool Expansion Research and Implementation, with the importance of students having a preschool education, and the work that is being done to look into this possibility. Justin Humphryes from TBA Architects presented slides on the Hemenway Pre-Feasibility Study with their findings on the condition of the current building, as well as possibilities for renovation and new buildings for the possibility of Hemenway as well as a Pre-K-K. Dr. Tremblay said these are critical decisions for down the road and spoke to the importance of continuing to carry this forward for a long term facility needs and for early childhood opportunities. He said that they are not going to be completing all options, and added that there will be an upcoming enrollment update at a future meeting. Mr. Wadland asked if the Scenario 1 for a building for Pre-K to 5 at Bethany Road and Pre-K-K at Water Street is two or three buildings, and suggested that a connector be added from the Pre-K-K to the other building to make it qualify for possible MSBA assistance, as they only participate in one building. Mr. Humphreys said it is three buildings, one at Water Street and two at Bethany Road, he said that the size could be reduced, as well as cost, with sharing some of the facilities such as the cafeteria and recreational spaces. Mr. Freudberg spoke about the enrollment surge that we are in, noted how long it takes to build a new school so it is good to plan now, and on why it's important to keep and plan for this to be managed for the surge in the future. Ms. Barnhill said there is a need for a new elementary school specifically on the south side; two out of three students live south of Route 9, and three out of nine elementary schools are south of Route 9, which means that students are bused to all different schools at opposite sides of the city. She said that the location and site condition of the Bethany property would make it an ideal location to look at.

Motion: To take the necessary steps to advance the purchase and planning to acquire and construct a new school on a portion of the Bethany site, including spending FY20 funds to make an appraisal of cost.

Moved: Ms. Barnhill

Seconded: Ms. Hugo

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Discussion: Members spoke in favor of this motion and the property that would be a good fit, as well as the possible cost effect on bussing if there were another school on the south side. Mr. Lynch said that the first step to get more information on a site is for an appraisal. Mayor Spicer said that this is not a new issue, and said she would be truly remiss if she did not state concerns about focusing on this at this very moment, as there are competing priorities. Mr. Torti said that a past demographic study showed that there were over 700 students in walking distance of the Bethany site, and the owners of the property contacted former town officials expressing their desire for the property to continue in an educational function. He said that past studies also showed multiple sites on the south side, but most of which would require a combination of parcels, and the Bethany property is a single owner with multiple parcels that could be used for city use in the future.

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

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

Mr. Freudberg said that the City Solicitor's recommendation is to also start the RFP process for other options on the south side. Mr. Lynch said he will have to revisit the 2014 study to see if it needs updates, and the appraisal will help get more information, and then can make decisions down the road when the financial situation becomes more stable and more known. Mr. Lynch said he will start working on getting an appraisal and will continue to get updates.

High School Space Study

Dr. Tremblay said that with previous enrollment reports and the McKibben Report, they decided to have a study to look at the continuing increased high school enrollment, and how to utilize the current space the best we can, rather than building an additional high school. Principal Banach talked about the High School Space Study team that included all voices; staff, administration, students and community members. She spoke about how they looked at how new programs could be brought in, usage of common areas, hallway crowding, and repurposing office space, among other items. Student Advisory Chair Nick Small spoke to the student voice regarding the crowded hallways. Mr. Humphreys discussed the study including the suggested three year plan that looks at space use and adjacencies, analysis by time and area, circulation analysis, and room capacity and layout, and what those include.

FY20 Budget. Mr. Lynch said that there are a lot of unknowns still, which makes it tough to project how the year will end, and one of the big variables is if schools reopen this year or not. He said before schools closed, the last projected end closeout was \$1.4 million, but he thinks this number will be higher as a lot of expenses are not being made right now such as overtime and substitutes. He said that the school closing has created some additional costs such as WiFi hotspots, PPE, and online platforms. He said that in the City Council Finance Subcommittee the mention of the hiring freeze was regarding hires on the cityside. He said that the school department put a freeze on starting April 3rd for hiring, where the only approved hires are classroom teachers, Special Education teachers, and ESL teachers. He said that the only expenses being approved are those that support online learning and the Covid-19 situation. He said that in the future there will need to be a discussion and vote on the available balance at the end of year, and he would recommend carrying it over to the Circuit Breaker which would lower down the FY21 request.

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FY21 Budget Submission. Mr. Lynch said that the current projection is anywhere between \$4.4 and \$5 billion for a shortfall in revenue, which will significantly affect our FY21 budget. He said that he does not think the anticipated \$7.1 million in Chapter 70 increase that Framingham was slated for will remain the same, and that the Student Opportunity Act deadline has been moved. He said that the school department's budget request still shows a 6.4 percent increase for next year. Mr. Freudberg acknowledged that everyone is dealing with the annual budget deadline requirements in a schedule that doesn't align with reality anymore, since everyone is waiting on the Federal and State stimulus package, as well as the CARES Act. He said that the committee and district is ready to collaborate and work with the Mayor on the budget before the final number is reached, at the same time balancing for needs for the next school year.

Fuller Project Update. Mr. Freudberg said that this project is still ongoing; construction is still authorized and they have a daily safety plan. He said that the original completion date was anticipated for June 2021, but has been pushed back to July 2021 due to delay in some materials. Mr. Wadland said the Topping Off Ceremony will not be until the future when schools are back in session, but they will videotape the installation of the final beam and that will be played at the future ceremony, along with other activities.

Remarks from the Student Advisory Committee

Mr. Small spoke about what students' lives have been like since remote learning. He said that so far remote learning has been successful, and the enrichment has helped with classes and being able to look over things again. He said that they are still extracurricular activities remotely, Flyer News remotely, and there will be remote community service starting next week. He said that overall students are happy with skipping April break.

Mayor Spicer Update

Mayor Spicer said that every day there is an Emergency Management Team call to discuss what the City is doing to keep safe and where we are with our number for COVID-19. She said that the newer cases are direct contacts with cases that may have been tested positive, which shows that it is not widespread in the community but rather engagement with close contacts. She said that they follow up with each case to create opportunities to be quarantined in different spaces than with their families if it is difficult in the current living situation. She said that this is worked out through the Health Department. In answer to a question for Ms. Sousa, she said that the living accommodations are in hotels. She said that she will be issuing an Executive Order, in conjunction with the Board of Health, for a requirement of face masks when in public spaces. Mayor Spicer thanked Joseph Corazinni for his work with food security, and said that they are working with food providers and partners who work with constituents who might need food. She said that these needs are going to increase. She said that they are redeploying staff to help out in different areas and reaching out to all populations. Ms. Dempsey said she is concerned about vulnerable populations and how information is getting to them. Mayor Spicer said they work with over 30 community partners that serve all populations. Mr. Corazinni said this situation requires multiple avenues of communication for families, and phone calls are made as well as online communication.

Motion: To approve the March 18 Open Session Minutes

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Moved: Ms. Sousa **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Dempsey, Wadland, Freudberg, Sousa, Epstein, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

*Ms. Dempsey left the meeting at 10:12 p.m.

Motion: To accept the \$1,000 donation from the Russian School of Mathematics-Metrowest for additional wireless hotspots or other needs to enable online learning during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Moved: Mr. Epstein **Seconded:** Ms. Sousa **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Freudberg, Sousa, Epstein, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Ms. Sousa

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Superintendent's Goals Presentation on Hemenway, Bethany Road Site, and FHS

Superintendent's Goals Final for Presentation

Architect Presentation on Hemenway, Bethany Road Site, and FHS

Hemenway Pre-Feasibility Study

Budget Narrative

Warrants

Draft March 18, 2020 Open Session Minutes

Memo Regarding Donation from the Russian School of Mathematics