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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
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: May 19, 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
Senate President Karen Spilka
State Representative Jack Patrick Lewis
State Representative Maria Robinson
State Representative Carmine Gentile

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George King, City Council Chair
Janet Leombruno, City Council
Christine Long, City Council
Cesar Stewart-Morales, City Council
Adam Steiner, City Council
Michael Cannon, City Council
Robert Case, City Council
Philip Ottaviani, City Council
Margareth Shepard, City Council
John Stefanini, City Council
Tracey Bryant, City Council

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., after the City Council Chair called their meeting to order. He said that the meeting is being broadcast live and noted that all School Committee members are in attendance including the ex-officio member Mayor Yvonne Spicer.

Joint Meeting with the City Council and Legislative Delegation on COVID-19 and the Budget

City Council Chair George King welcomed Framingham's Legislative Delegation. Senate President Spilka said that Framingham is a great representation of resilience and strength in overall difficult times, and spoke about all the different organizations that have been providing services. She said she understands the general fiscal issues and the need for some certainty on what state will provide for both FY21 and Chapter 70, and other local aid, and is committed to providing certainty as soon as possible, but there is still uncertainty. She said that some of this uncertainty was seen during the recent Economic Summit which estimated a \$4-6 billion deficit over what was previously estimated, for a total of an estimated \$7-8 billion deficit. She stressed that cities should not use the Governor's January numbers as these numbers are not relevant anymore. She said that there is another \$3 trillion COVID stimulus proposal called the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES) which would include \$10 billion or more to Massachusetts and cities/towns with flexible revenue, but it is unknown when this will be agreed upon at the Federal level and funds provided. She noted in the past recession of 2009-2010 the state received \$1 billion in education aid, and thus far during this recession have only received \$200 million, which is a really big gap. She urged the City of Framingham to write a letter or resolution to send to the delegation, including the House and Senate, and the White House supporting the need for the HEROES act and asking to specifically lay out local aid, state aid, education aid. She said that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act has already been passed, and Framingham is eligible for \$6.4 million in reimbursements for COVID 19 related expenses in FY20 and FY21. She said that there are three criterias to access the funding: only for expenses incurred between March 1st and December 30, 2020, the money cannot be used to substantiate loss revenue, and cannot be used to reimburse money that had already been budgeted as of March 27, 2020. She said that these requirements are strict and they are working to help loosen them. She said that Framingham needs to identify costs incurred, submit those on a specific form, which will then be netted out for cost to first receive FEMA reimbursement, then CARES Act, and the remaining amount can carry over to FY21. She said that even though the Senate is behind when they are

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usually submitted, and being \$500 million under what was anticipated they are not planning on cutting items such as unrestricted local aid or education aid, and are looking at all line items and conserving. She said that although Massachusetts has one of the best rainy day funds in the Country, they are hesitant to use a lot of the funds as recessions generally take a few years. Representatives Maria Robinson, Jack Patrick Lewis, and Carmine Gentile spoke about all the work they have been doing across the City, as well as encouraging everyone to reach out to them for any needs, and their support in advocating for what is needed.

Questions. Mr. Epstein said that capital projects in the past had funds to accelerate them, and spoke about upcoming projects such as solar Power Purchase Agreement projects that could be low cost, and asked if there was any talk about the construction domain and deferring or accelerating projects. Senator Spilka said that the Shovel Ready funds in the past were provided by the federal government to get some capital projects going and get people back to work. She said that there are currently no funds for that right now. She said this could possibly change if money is sent back from the CARES act and there may be some coverage under the HEROES Act. Representative Robinson said that planned projects under the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) are still moving forward, and there are no signs of that necessarily stopping. Senator Spilka noted that DCAMM funding was state funding and not part of the COVID 19 stimulus funding. Dr. Tremblay asked if there were any updates on the Student Opportunity Act funds, as the deadline to submit the forms has been pushed back, but it is unclear if we should be planning on any funds. Senator Spilka said this is something she has raised, and will continue to raise, with the Commissioner. She said that at this point it is uncertain what education funding will be, and need to wait and see what the Federal Government will give. She said that she will continue to ask the Commissioner about this, as well as if they are expecting and hold firm on the June submission deadline. Mr. Freudberg said that the School Committee is discussing and voting on a resolution supporting education funding, such as Senator Spilka suggested, tomorrow night at their meeting, and he will share this with the City Council. He noted that federal aid will be important in this fiscal year and years to come.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

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

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

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

The School Committee meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m. and the City Council meeting continued.

Meeting Materials

Agenda