



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: July 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
Anne Ludes, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education
Joanna Hastry, Executive Assistant for the School Committee

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 that earlier in the evening the committee met in Executive Session 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 declares (which he did) pursuant to MGL, specifically for Units A, B, C, N, S, and T. And also for a review of Executive Session minutes from the previous committee and this term as part of the committee's ongoing review of previously made redactions to move forward for open session approvals later on the agenda.

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 asked for a moment of silence to reflect on all those who are suffering in our community, state, nation, and world.

Public Comment

Dhruba Sen said that on July 4th in the Nobscot area there will be a community reading of the famous speech "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass at 6:00 p.m. that he would like to invite everyone to attend. He said he thinks there should be a resolution for Black Lives Matter if there hasn't been one already.

Mr. Freudberg said he will have sent a copy of the Anti-Racist Resolution that the committee voted to be a part of at the last meeting, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

FTA President Chris Mulrone said that DESE has released its initial guidance on school reopening which notes that it was written after feedback from many different stakeholders with the goal to get all students back to in person instruction safely. She said teachers did not enter this career for Zoom classes and not knowing what students would show up or have access, and also want to be back and do so safely. She said that there are serious concerns with the guidance that she has shared with the School Committee and Central Office such as 3 ft versus 6 ft. for social distancing, desk setup and how that will allow skills to be learned, and teaching with masks on. She said that Appendix A in the document says that schools do not appear to have made a major contribution in the transmission of COVID-19 and there are lower rates for children. She said that these studies have not been peer reviewed, and have little data due to school closures in the Spring, as well as does not mention the effects on staff at all. She said that DESE needs more educator input within the guidelines.

Gerry Bloomfield said that he thinks the split shift option for schools is a feasible way forward to a successful school opening in September. He said that there should be a matrix sheet posting all the different options for school in the Fall against the desired criteria. He said that he is concerned that reimbursements from the McKinney Vento students will become a problem again as they had in the past.

Announcement from the Chair

The Chair said that the City Council is advertising a district position in the Framingham Youth Council, the application can be found online and the deadline to apply is July 9th. He said that at the City Council meeting they spoke about returning to in person meetings in City Hall, and

the Committee can talk as a team about this in the future to prepare for if and when the city removes the restrictions. He recognized McAuliffe Charter School Executive Director Kristin Harrison for all her great work at McAullife as today was her last day there after a decade.

Back to School Preliminary Planning

Dr. Tremblay shared the Back to School Planning slides and noted that this is not a final document, and is very high level. He said that the Back to School Taskforce has looked at going back to school with a fully remote, a hybrid model, and a fully remote options, and what problems may arise with each. He said that they are following guidance from DESE and the governor, and the medical items are mandates.

Questions. Mr. Wadland asked about the role of the Framingham Teachers' Association within the taskforce, as he has heard that the MTA has not been engaged at state level. He also asked if it was thought about how student populations in any given space will be affected by transitions, such as students who spend part of the day in inclusion classrooms and other parts of the day in sub-separate classes, and how that may affect the plan in regards to cohorts, etc. Ms. Ludes said that the taskforce had over 40 building based staff made up of many different roles within the district, a few administrators, representatives from every school, paraprofessionals, the FTA president, nurses, teachers, interventionists, and more. She said that there have also been separate elementary and secondary groups with representation from the FTA that meet weekly to discuss how remote learning is going. She said that there will never be 100 percent isolation of a cohort, but every building will have explicit instructions on how to enter the school, how to exit, what happens in different situations such as early dismissal, and tracking students and entering rooms for push out services or consultation.

*Ms. Dempsey disconnected due to internet issues and joined by phone.

Ms. Maskell asked if the filters and ventilation systems in schools are being updated. Dr. Tremblay said he will check on this with the Building and Grounds Department. Mr. Freudberg said that there is work that can be done with ventilation and filters, but more details are needed and funds have not been authorized for any upgrades yet. Ms. Maskell asked how we are going to protect employees from exposing their loved ones who are at home, especially if they are susceptible to COVID-19. Dr. Tremblay said that the expectation is that all students and all staff come back to in person learning, with the understanding that there will be exceptions to that. He said they are trying to match up staff that need to be home with students who will be, and are looking at the surveys on what staff are thinking and how many to expect. Ms. Maskell asked how decisions are being made, and what it will look like, for families that want their children to stay at home. Dr. Tremblay said that this will be allowed, and this year the usual attendance will be changed, and they are doing the best they can given the circumstances. He added that they are looking into the possibility of having teachers who are back to live-stream so students who are at home can see the class and teachers, rather than just videos. He said that this has to be discussed with the FTA and bargained. Mr. Epstein said that students will definitely be doing remote learning at some point and would like to see a lot of attention on improving remote instruction. Mr. Epstein asked how the Fuller building design will be impacted with thoughts of now having to prevent COVID-19, and if there was any consideration of ozone generators or UV in air flow filters to help clean the buildings. Director of Building and Grounds Matt Torti said they are changing the filters to a high rating filtration,

which could cause problems with older systems working harder. He said that the School Building Committee should relook at the layout with Fuller in these times, but they did confirm that they are using the best practice and standards for the air flow system. He said that they are looking at ionisation systems and filtration, but handwashing and masks are where the focus has to be. He said that they are currently using misters that disinfect classrooms, which have the same effectiveness as ozone generators. Mr. Freudberg asked about the timing of the plan. Dr. Tremblay said the plan has to be submitted in August to DESE, and they are still waiting on transportation and food services guidance from the state. Mr. Freudberg said that the Board of Health and Director of Public Health Dr. Sam Wong will be at the next meeting scheduled for July 15th. He noted that the state recently said that districts should plan for a level service plus budget, but there are no definite numbers yet. He said that there are two grant opportunities for technology and for per pupil allocation recently announced, and that this could mean that Framingham is eligible for an additional \$225 per pupil.

Mr. Freudberg said that he submitted the proposed School Reopening Goals: Ten Core Principles by the Framingham School Committee for review in the packets, so the committee had a chance to offer guidance if we so choose, but there does not have to be a vote tonight on these. Ms. Hugo said that she thinks that some of the points within the document has to do with day to day operations, but in the spirit of the team she would refer it to the Policy Subcommittee meeting next week to review further.

Motion: To refer the School Reopening Goals: Ten Core Principles by the Framingham School Committee to the Policy Subcommittee.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill

Discussion: Mr. Epstein said he would be careful around the timeline of how long it may take, and suggests that it be referred to the Policy Subcommittee as not a formal policy needing two readings. Ms. Maskell said that she appreciates the effort put into this document, but feels that it was a missed opportunity for all members to collaborate on. Mr. Freudberg acknowledged he agreed that would have been preferred, see the Policy Subcommittee review as a way to now include others, and mentioned the timeline did not allow for it, as the DESE plan came out in between posted meetings.

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

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

Discussion and Vote on Unit C Framingham School Custodians MOU

*Ms. Maskell recused herself at 8:46 p.m.

Mr. Freudberg said that this is a three year contract and will be retroactive as it is the last year for this contract.

Motion: To approve the Unit C Framingham School Custodians MOU

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

*Ms. Maskell returned to the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Superintendent's Update

Central Office & School Committee Office Location Updates

Dr. Tremblay said the Central Office is completely moved out of the Perini Building and thanked Perini for allowing us to remain there and with the changing of plans. He went over the different departments and where they will be working from. Mr. Freudberg confirmed, through asking, that there will be future guidance on how to get in touch with the different departments for phone calls, visits, mail, etc. Dr. Tremblay said that they are first making sure offices are COVID-19 ready and then will discuss contact information and guidelines. Mr. Freudberg recapped the recommendations for School Committee space needs from the memo from the School Committee's Executive Assistant. Members expressed their thanks for all staff who have used space in their own homes during this transition, and in the future, or for being flexible on where they will be located. Ms. Hugo said that she was hoping that some of the Central Office staff could be located within Stapleton Elementary School until they found a more permanent office space. Dr. Tremblay said that Stapleton does not have the physical space for that, but that does not mean staff will not be present in Stapleton.

Recap of Recent Meetings About School Resource Officers (SROs)

Dr. Tremblay said recently there were petitions both to keep SROs, as well as to get rid of SROs. He said he will be having a conversation with the Mayor and new Police Chief to talk about points that have been raised. He said that there are two SROs currently that are provided by the Framingham Police Department. Ms. Sousa said that this topic was discussed by the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Subcommittee with the Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Diversity and Community Development Joseph Corazzini, where they went over the MOU for SROs, and their role, and came up with seven recommendations. She read over the recommendations in regards to SROs: Revise the current MOU and specify processes, Automatic reports to Dr. Tremblay, Joseph Corazzini & Scott Penrod whenever there is a hands on incident, "Know Your Rights" training for students, Quarterly meetings between SROs and student representatives from middle schools and high school, De-escalation training for professionals on all levels, Discuss the role of SROs and what they do, and Get as much data as there currently is on SROs interactions with students. Mayor Spicer asked what data has been difficult finding for them, and said that this should be a partnership, and if they are looking for any information the Police Department can provide it. Ms. Sousa said some of the data they are looking for is how many hands on situations there have been and that the Framingham Public Schools don't currently receive that information automatically. Ms. Hugo said that there used to be three SROs and now have two, and asked what schools they are located at. Dr. Tremblay said there is one at the high school and the other one circulates through the middle and elementary schools as needed. He said part of the conversation that has come up is if there is a need for only one circulating throughout all schools. Ms. Hugo asked that the data that is being looked at is expanded to include things such as suspension data.

Motion: To support the recommendations regarding SROs from the Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Subcommittee.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill

Discussion. Mr. Wadland said that the Mayor had mentioned that the SROs conduct themselves in the schools at the direction of administration, and he would think that they are governed by the standards of police practice, and asked for clarification on this. Mayor Spicer said that they are police officers, but are in the schools at the invitation of the schools; the protocols of safety, de-escalation techniques, and suspensions are not in the purview of the

Police Department, but are in the purview of the school department. She said that the building leadership dictates their actions in school buildings. Mr. Wadland said he would like to hear from building administrators on their interactions with the SROs so everyone is on the same page. Members discussed that the current SROs are great, but the role needs to be defined, and more information needs to be available for members, students, and the community. Discussion about having the Policy Subcommittee look at this for possible policy changes, and after information that is requested is given. Mr. Freudberg said that there were new social worker positions in the original budget that had to be removed due to the Mayor's \$5 million budget cut, but the committee should think about if there is any way to restore those positions, such as through COVID-19 reimbursement funds or grants.

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

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

Motion: To refer the topic of SROs to the Policy Subcommittee, in order to create a policy.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

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

FY20 Update and FY21 Capital and Operating Budget Status

Dr. Tremblay said that they continue to work on closing out purchase orders, and invoices can be submitted up until July 14th, so they will give an update at the next meeting when they will have a more accurate projection on end of the year closeout. He said that the FY21 Capital Projects have been approved and are being worked on. He said that the state is still expecting plans from districts in August for Student Opportunity Act funds, and they are applying for COVID-19 reimbursements through FEMA and the CARES Act.

Process to Review Applications for the School Committee's Appointment to the Strategic Initiatives and Financial Oversight Committee (SIFOC)

*Mr. Freudberg recused himself at 9:33 p.m., noting he knows one of the candidates. He noted that the State Ethics Commission and City Solicitor advised he did not have to recuse, yet out of an abundance of caution he chose to do so.

Ms. Maskell chaired this portion of the meeting, and said it is to decide on the process on how to review the applications received for the open School Committee seat in the SIFOC. She said that they have received two applications so far and the deadline is Friday; the seat is for someone with a local community business connection. Discussion on how the process went last time with a temporary subcommittee, and how that went well and should be done again. Discussion and agreement on having Mr. Epstein and Mr. Wadland as co-chairs since they were on the temporary subcommittee last time, as well as being Chairs of subcommittees (Finance and Operations and Building and Grounds) that are connected to items within the SIFOC's purview.

Motion: To create a temporary subcommittee to review SIFOC applicants and give recommendations to the full committee.

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

Discussion: Ms. Sousa and Ms. Barnhill volunteered to be members on this temporary subcommittee.

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

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

*Mr. Freudberg returned to the meeting at 9:41 p.m.

Mayor's Update

Mayor Spicer said she is still keeping an eye on the budget as it may need to be revisited depending on what happens at the state level. She said that they have done a good job with making sure resources are available over the past few years. She said that COVID-19 numbers have been down, with only one new case over the past few days. She said that the topic of racism has been a big topic tonight and in the community, and she recently hosted three community conversations on this topic. She said that this is a multipronged issue and process, that every child should feel safe in the public schools, and it is not an easy fix. She said in the last session of the School Committee a resident delivered the book White Fragility to all members, and she thinks it is important that we start to have reading and conversation on this book. She said that we need to look at what we do in the curriculum and make sure kids feel represented in the classroom.

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Epstein said that warrants were signed. He added that in the future he would like to discuss referring the warrants process to the Policy Subcommittee as well as reviewing in the Finance and Operations Subcommittee.

Ms. Maskell said that the Policy Subcommittee met this week with MASC and will meet next week to review expectations of the subcommittee for the policy review process, and MASC will work on some documents for the committee to review for Section A. She said the next meeting will set the foundation for what to expect of MASC and subcommittee members.

Ms. Hugo said that the next Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting will be a workshop open to the public to focus on the subcommittee mission, long term agenda, and what data they would like to see, and the challenges of the district, among other topics.

Mr. Epstein said that there was a Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee meeting on Tuesday, where they discussed a letter that districts are sending to MSBA encouraging them to make it a requirement that all school building projects are fully electric, and which Framingham was invited to join and the subcommittee unanimously agreed upon. He added that the Fuller Middle School Building Project is a MSBA project, but does not meet the proposed requirements, and suggests a vote on having the Fuller School Building Committee revisit all electric options, what it would take financially and timewise to meet the proposed requirements, and to ensure whatever design is picked that fossil fuel can be switched to easily. He added that he would also request a document on what the environmentally friendly plans are for all schools. He also said in the future he would suggest having the Policy Subcommittee look at creating a climate change environment policy. Mr. Freudberg said that this could be brought to the next School Building Committee meeting on July 13th. He added that this was looked at by that committee in the past, but there are new technologies since then.

Motion: In light of the School Committee's recent unanimous support of a letter to the MSBA encouraging a requirement that all school building projects funded by the MSBA be fully electric, the School Committee requests that the Fuller School Building Committee promptly assess the impact on the Fuller project of switching away from fossil fuels, with regard to

project timeline and finances, with sufficient detail for the School Committee to fully understand the options

Moved: Mr. Epstein **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge

Discussion: Ms. Hugo asked for input from the Director of Building and Grounds regarding this as she thinks it will be expensive. Mr. Torti joined the meeting and said that he supports the idea of looking into if things can be converted in the future, but he thinks the Fuller Project is too far along to convert at this point.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (8-1-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Dempsey, Freudberg, Sousa, Epstein, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge. No: Wadland)

Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of May 19, 2020 Joint Meeting with the City Council, May 20, 2020, and May 27, 2020.

Moved: Ms. Maskell **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

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

Motion: To approve the Executive Session redactions reviews and the new Executive Session minutes as listed on the agenda and as approved in Executive Session.

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

*Ms. Maskell recused herself at 10:20 p.m.

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

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

Review Long-Term Agenda for Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Hugo suggested adding a Goals Workshop with both the School Committee and Superintendent together, a self evaluation/self examination workshop, and a workshop with discussion on the book White Fragility along with looking at the current policies in reflection. Ms. Maskell added that the Goals Workshop needs to be a joint effort with the School Committee coming up with their own goals independent of the Superintendent's goals. Ms. Dempsey asked for the Special Education Department to come to a meeting to discuss DESE regulations during COVID-19 and ADA improvements. Dr. Tremblay said when there is a final reopening plan multiple leaders will be present to answer questions and this is already on the agenda for the future. Mr. Epstein suggested that the general approach to data and reports should be within the goals, and there should be an external review of the Special Education Department. Mr. Freudberg said that Dr. Tremblay has added data as an agenda as one of the items to be scheduled. Ms. Maskell suggested bringing in the therapy dog during a discussion on the policy on animals in schools. Mr. Freudberg suggested adding the topic of the name of Woodrow Wilson Elementary School to a future agenda.

Motion: To refer the reconsidering of renaming the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School to the Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Subcommittee.

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

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg noted that Policy FF determines the purview the committee has when looking at names of existing school buildings. Discussion occurred on looking at this name first and then reviewing all the school names. Dr. Tremblay said that he has a call with students tomorrow about their concerns regarding the name and has received a petition to change the name as well. Mr. Freudberg said that he reached out to the Historical Society

about the history of the naming to learn why it was chosen in the first place. Ms. Hugo noted that this is an International Baccalaureate school which may have some rules regarding renaming.

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

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

Mr. Freudberg noted that the Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Diversity and Community Development Joseph Corazinni had offered to do an Equity Workshop for free. Ms. Barnhill asked for information on student population based on the students' districts where they live rather than based on schools. Dr. Tremblay said he will look to see if this can be done inhouse or get a cost estimate from McKibben Demographics to obtain this information.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Mr. Epstein

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

FPS Back to School Task Force Slides

DESE Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance

Proposed Joint Statement on School Reopening Goals and Values

Recommendations on School Committee Office Space Needs

Recommendations from Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Subcommittee

MOU Between Framingham Public Schools and Framingham Police Department

Warrants

Draft May 19, 2020 Joint Meeting Minutes

Draft May 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Draft May 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Long-Term Agenda

List of Minutes with Redactions 2010-Present

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

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on August 19, 2020.