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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: May 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Remote

MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Adam Freudberg

PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Geoffrey Epstein
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Priscila Sousa
Scott Wadland
Mayor Yvonne Spicer

ABSENT: Karen Dempsey

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Dr. McKibben of McKibben Demographic Research, LLC
Nicholas Small, Student Advisory Committee Chair
Joseph Corazinni, Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Diversity,
and Community Development
Mikaele Nieves, Director of the Parent Information Center

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Kevin Shea, Director of Planning and Community Development
Kristina Johnson, Planning Board Chair
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
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 now a voice option for public comment. He noted all in attendance, and said that member Karen Dempsey is absent due to an unforeseen medical issue. He asked for a moment of silence to reflect on all those that are suffering in our city, state, nation and world.

Public Comment

Gerry Bloomfield asked with social distancing in overcrowded schools relative to starting in the fall: where are we regarding busses, classrooms, and hallways and who is leading the way in the district. He asked if there will be demonstrations that parents can see well before school starts in September. He asked if we are looking to split school times or at adding busses and drivers. He said that we are paying now for not using busses and there needs to be some sort of mandate clearly communicated to the taxpayers as to why we are paying. He said that there needs to be communication on the claim of increased student enrollment; where are they coming from and where are they living. He said that there needs to be information on the projected FY20 budget number for June, and justification for any new full time employees for the FY21 year.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair said that the School Committee specific department budget has a projected surplus of \$15,349.

Presentation of MA Association of School Committee Awards

The Chair said that they are awarding the 2019 MASC winners, and that Beverly Hugo had nominated all of these winners last year.

Ms. Hugo introduced OUT MetroWest Executive Director, Donna Tambascio, Representatives for founders Jack Patrick Lewis, and Marie Caradonna for the award of Outstanding School Partners Award and read the nomination form that was sent in. She introduced Mel Weinzimer from the Metrowest Captain of the Retirees School Volunteer Association for the award of MASC Friend of Public Education and read the nomination form that was sent in. Mr. Freudberg introduced Homework Center Coordinator Judy Gatlin, Executive Director Mark Contois and the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, Elizabeth Roy for the Homework Center at the Framingham Public Library to award the MASC Outstanding School Partners Award, and Carol Phalen to award the MASC Community Leader for Public Education Award and read the

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nomination forms. Recipients thanked MASC and the School Committee for the awards and spoke briefly about their respective organization missions.

Report on Enrollment Projections with Demographer Dr. McKibben, and Discussions with the Planning & Community Development Division on Population/Enrollment/Long-Term Planning

Dr. Tremblay introduced Dr. McKibben, Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch, Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Diversity, and Community Development Joseph Corazinni, Director of the Parent Information Center Mikaele Nieves, Director of Planning and Community Development Kevin Shea, and Planning Board Chair Kristina Johnson. Dr. Tremblay said that in the past year the district has done some enrollment forecasting and this presentation will show changes that took place from last year for enrollment forecasting, what that may look like in the wake of the pandemic, and how it may influence the forecast going forward. Dr. McKibben went through his presentation and said that these were completed two to three days before the virus hit. He said that they usually estimate that their forecasting will be within 2 percent, but with all the current uncertainty they will be using 5 percent now. He said that Framingham has different demographics than neighboring districts, including a lot of students living in apartments, and with the current situation may see a drop in mobility of students out of apartments. He added that there also could be a return of students from private or charter schools due to economic concerns, which could be between 8-12 percent higher, more likely 8 percent. He went over the age structure within Framingham based on the 2010 census, and noted that it includes college students and apartment dwellers so have a high amount of 0-4 year olds compared to other areas, but this is not evenly distributed across the district. He showed through charts how there are completely different demographics across the city. He noted that Barbieri and King do not have set boundaries so they are not included in some of the charts, but they are included in the enrollment forecast. He showed the total enrollment forecast with a breakdown by all grades through the next ten years and said that the district is looking at a 700 student increase; likely increasing in the next few years and then leveling out. He said that the highest increase is due to a cohort effect moving up through the grades, and the distribution of the students within the grades are going to continue to change, slowly shifting south as it has been. He said that the biggest concern is the high school over the next five years as it will increase during that time and then level off. He said that the economy could collapse for five years, but will still see that increase as the amount of students are already in the district.

Questions. Mr. Epstein said that the school budget needs to scale with the student population and suggested when we do see the population increases looking at where students are from and confirm what the forecasting is based on, such as within new residential development. Dr. McKibben said most of the variance are in grades three and above, and there is a lot of mobility within the district with internal migration. Ms. Hugo said that she is concerned if the high school will become overcrowded, and asked, with the total population forecast of the number of 14-19 year olds in 2025 being 5,750 if it takes into account the up to 12 percent that may be coming back from private schools due to the economy, the possibility of more apartments and migration, and how he determines from that number how many in that population will actually end up attending the high school. Dr. McKibben said it does not take into account the students coming back from private schools, but there will be less students in private schools in high school grades due to cost, and said possibly 3 percent coming back for the high school, adding

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as much as 50-60, maybe higher, more students. He said that he does not include 19 year olds in the high school forecast, as they are often not high school students, and that apartments often do not yield a high number of high school students unless it is a dire situation. He added that the population number of 14-19 years olds would not change based on students coming from private to public schools, as it is not migration, instead just a changing of education options, as they are already living in the City. Ms. Hugo asked if the over 1,000 apartments being built was included in the forecasting, as well as the possibility of people getting priced out of the Boston area, as well as the possibility of people looking for more space due to COVID-19. Dr. McKibben said if the apartments are all planned and permitted, they assume it is coming in, and the potential for error is greater in the downside rather than the upside. He said with the Boston pricing that has been the migration flow anyways, and unless a large amount, the district is not going to see a higher number coming in. He added that the need for jobs and resources to move and unemployment at levels haven't been seen since the 1930s, very few people will have the opportunity to move. Ms. Barnhill said that with all the numbers forecasted prior to the closure due to COVID-19 if updates would be given in the future. Dr. McKibben said that with all forecasts they contact the districts in September when official fall numbers are taken and can then evaluate by grade and building and see if they are within the 2 percent forecast, and gives the first opportunity to measure how models and assumptions are holding up. He noted that last year they did not include pre-k and they did this year. Ms. Barnhill noted that there were many apartment complexes, such as the Buckley, the Bancroft, and the Alta Union Apartments.that are not listed in the supplemental attachments and asked if vacant ones were being included. Dr. McKibben said that they consider full occupancy at 95 percent, the vacancy rate is a key variable and if changes it means they have overbuilt. Ms. Sousa asked if the significant international immigration from Central America and South America was taken into account. Dr. McKibben said it was, and that there is also a lot of international immigration coming from other cities, and that there will be an increase in diversity due to the age structure. He said that the average age of someone from Central America is 26 years old, Hispanic-28, Black-30, Asian-32, White-43. He then asked, "Who is going to have more kids?"Ms. Sousa noted that he was using Central American and Hispanic interchangeably, and asked if he was accounting for the large population of Brazilians in Framingham. Dr. McKibben said there is a lower flow now than in the past. Mayor Spicer said that this data was before COVID-19 and suggested that when the data is revisited for it to take into account education in many different forms. She also said that the number of people in Framingham that actually have school aged children is 25 percent, and said that it is another factor in community thinking long term on how to keep that desirability of people coming into Framingham. Dr. McKibben said that the world moving forward is going to be different and we will need different metrics and parameters on how to measure things. Ms. Johnson, Mr. Shea, and Dr. Tremblay spoke about the coordination between the City and District. They spoke about the need to unpack the data and understand the true absorption rate for multifamily units and they are keeping an eye on what's being bought and sold. Ms. Johnson noted that the MetroWest is a job generator, which increases desirability for people to live there. Dr. Tremblay said that in regards to the high school capacity they have been looking at the utilization in space as it is under utilized, and added that they are looking to move the Technology Department out of the high school to create more space for students and staff. He

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added that this also is linked to the preschool expansion and Hemenway prefeasibility study which are also included in his goals and the Strategic Plan.

Superintendent's Report - COVID 19 Updates

Dr. Tremblay said that with the unexpected year end closure students and staff left items in the schools and they recently worked with the City's Department of Health for them to be able to go retrieve those items. He said that teachers have been bagging up all students' supplies and labeling the bags for parents to come pick them up. He said that they are working on a plan for items that need to be returned from the graduating class. He said that the prom was cancelled due to current circumstances, and there will be a full refund to the class.

He said that while we are still awaiting guidance from DESE regarding summer programming, Framingham made a decision to continue with remote learning for the summer for a variety of reasons, primarily for safety of all. He said that they will be looking at some opportunities to test drive an in person model, including for certain services that cannot be accomplished in a remote environment such as occupational and physical therapy. He said that they continue to watch trends with what is happening with reopening the economy and what the impacts are. He added that by having summer programming remote, it saves money in FY21 for transportation and personnel costs.

Dr. Tremblay said for the reopening of schools they are having to think about it differently, plotting it all and going back and addressing the different areas in anticipation of forthcoming guidance from the state. He said a survey went out to all staff for a taskforce on the reopening of schools, and are looking to have more voice and more ideas put together to put a plan which will then be compared against DESE guidance and the Centers for Disease Control to make sure it is compliant, and will then vet with the School Committee and the City's Department of Health. He said that there are some challenges they are anticipating such as social distancing in hallways in the high school and on busses. He said that they have been collaborating with the labor unions. Members discussed if children are at less risk for COVID 19 and could possibly have in person learning, as well as how it may affect family members at home.

Superintendent's Update-FY20 Budget

Mr. Lynch spoke to a budget memo that was provided in the packets with projections for FY20 for where it will be on June 30th. He said that since March 12th they have done things very different; they stopped hiring besides teachers in front of students, and expense wise have halted any new expenses that don't support remote learning, cleaning of buildings, etc. He said some of those expenses they will be able to reclass and get covered by federal and state funds. He said that for salary savings it is projected to be just over \$2 million, additional salaries are projected to have a 11.4% savings and for expenses he is projecting \$2.2 million, for a total of \$4.7 million. He said that he continues to talk with principals and directors on how to close out purchase orders, so the number could grow a little bit due to that as well as CARES Act funds. He said that they are looking to use some of this money to carry over into the Circuit Breaker account to help decrease the FY21 budget by helping drive down the out of district costs. Mr. Wadland said that the total projected balance is \$4.7M but the recommendation is to carry over \$4.358 million, and asked if there is a reason why we wouldn't carry over the full amount.

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Mr. Lynch said the \$4.358 million is the number that specifically covers the budget's shortfall, but would like to carry over as much as we can to create a buffer. Mr. Wadland said we should look at a plan, as just closing the gap removes a bunch of contractual positions, and the \$1.4 million could be put to good use on replacing those positions. Mr. Epstein said the school budget is underfunded; Chapter 70 state aid funds are 80% of the budget and local contribution has plummeted down in the fiscal years since being a city.

Federal/State Reimbursements and Payments

Mr. Lynch said he has been working with the City Finance Officer to get all COVID 19 expenses reimbursed through FEMA and the CARES Act, through multiple submissions. He said he would recommend using these funds this year and then move the available \$1.8 million in K-12 funding to FY21 to cover any COVID related expenses that are not budgeted, such as adding busses or additional hot spots. He went over examples of items that we have expended on during FY20 for COVID 19 such as chromebooks, deep cleaning. Ms. Maskell asked why extra chromebooks were purchased if we already had enough for 1:1. Dr. Tremblay said that they purchased addition as part of the life cycle plan to replace old and outdated chromebooks, and are now ahead and should be able to reduce next year's life cycle budget. Members discussed if a vote needs to be taken to support this plan, with the consensus being that it was not needed. Ms. Hugo asked for information on hot spots. Mr. Lynch said that they purchased 375 hotspots and they pay for the connection and subscription which goes for a year.

Fees Impacted by COVID 19

Mr. Lynch said that they are looking to refund two of the 9 payments for BLOCKS Preschool payments, which takes into consideration the 64 days students were out of school and accounts for time during the week that students are still getting communication from staff. He said that any family that has credits on after school program accounts will be refunded as they paid for a service that was not provided.

FY21 Budget Submission, Student Opportunity Act Status, and Impacts and Changes Due to COVID-19

Mr. Lynch shares his presentation he had previously shared with the City Council, on how to close the budget gap from what the district proposed to what the Mayor's submission was. He said that this would give a level service budget of \$6.6 million which would keep what we have, and additional positions needed due to enrollment legal compliance, with a \$3.3 million gap from what was asked for by the district. His slides included what will be included in this new recommendation, and where savings were made, such as eliminating new position requests. He said that this plan assumes that the Student Opportunity Act funds are not going to be fully implemented on Chapter 70 side. Mr. Freudberg said that the requested positions are all needed after a school by school zero based budgeting review, and it is depressing that the positions are not possible anymore. Dr. Tremblay noted that they kept the positions needed for legal compliance as they would be held responsible in the future and it would end up costing more. Mr. Lynch said that even after all the recommendations there would still be a \$2.85 million gap which they are looking to close by carrying funds over to the circuit breaker account.

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Questions. Mr. Wadland asked about using funds from the revolving accounts, as athletics will not have any money replenished. He asked for a list of positions and from what schools will not be filled as part of this recommendation. Mr. Lynch said that any of the positions that say legal compliance and some Fuller positions are included in the FY21 budget, he will provide a list showing what was included and what was not. He said that the positions that are considered contractual are based on class size recommendations that are in the contracts. Dr. Tremblay said there is not a plan in this model to eliminate existing staff, they may be reassigned by another vacancy such as retiring teacher which would end up being a savings. He noted that when schools reopen we will have a serious need for remediation which will need staffing. He said we are looking at streamlining middle management positions such as not filling the two empty Assistant Directors for Teaching and Learning at this time. Mr. Epstein asked for what class sizes are for FY20 and where they are going in FY21, as well as asked to what degree is population driving special education costs. Mr. Lynch said they see special education students leaving the district from graduation or aging out at 22, so don't see a big increase in population at this time. Members asked about additional supports at Stapleton. Mr. Lynch said that they implemented 8 new positions at Stapleton this current year to support the needs of students and they are carried over into FY21. Ms. Maskell expressed her concern about special education students, as she said that they are the ones who are getting hurt the most and creating the biggest gap due to not receiving occupational therapy or 12 month schooling that their IEPs may require. Dr. Tremblay agreed and said that if needs to be further reduced they will be looking elsewhere and they are focused on meeting kids needs. Mr. Epstein asked if funding from Title 1 will be impacted this year from COVID as we have an expanding student population within this category. Mr. Lynch said it is a possibility but it does not come out until the summer, he said he always looks at level funding for all grants across the board. Mr. Epstein said the model for education in the fall will impact the budget incredibly. He suggested cutting the paper and copier budget further now that all students have access to chromebooks. Mr. Lynch said it was already reduced and can't see how to reduce it to zero, which if done, would have to think about how to address it with the staff. Discussion on how some students or families need paper as an option, and looking to cut it further in the future. Mr. Freudberg suggested that with the fear of the budget gap widening with all the unknowns, we should see what other savings we can do within FY20, and encouraged everyone to keep tracking the City Council and their Finance Subcommittee's review of the budget. Mr. Epstein said he is looking to schedule a Finance and Operations Subcommittee to include Durham and possibly city officials in order to see if they can find more savings and to discuss FY20 now and a model going forward. Dr. Tremblay announced that he will be having a webinar on the FY21 school budget for community question and answers on May 27th at 5:00 p.m.

Vote on Budget Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public Education

Mr. Freudberg said the changes in the red are adding lines about public safety and collaboration with the community, parents, and departments. He said that it was asked that the committee vote on this to increase federal support and stimulus funding for public education based on MASC and Boston Public Schools resolution who encourages other school committees to pass this.

Motion: To approve this resolution.

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Moved: Ms. Sousa

Seconded: Mr. Epstein

Discussion: Ms. Hugo asked that this also be sent to the Massachusetts Association of Superintendents as well as the White House, and that be noted in the resolution. Ms. Maskell asked that all members have more time to be able to contribute to these.

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

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

Mr. Freudberg thanked Mayor Spicer and Student Advisory Chair Nicholas Small for also participating in this.

Central Office Lease

Mr. Freudberg said the City Council has referred this to the Finance Subcommittee, and Dr. Tremblay, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Wadland and himself will be invited to that meeting to speak to it. He said that this is the lease that was negotiated down to a lower per square price and will help with high school space, and we will all continue to provide updates and track the status.

Remarks from the FPS Student Advisory Committee

Student Advisory Committee members Nicholas Small and Rose Bailey spoke to a survey they sent to students over the past week about how the sleep cycle has changed since school closure. They said that it was open for six days and 379 students responded, it was also translated. They went over the results including that 71 percent of respondents said that they are getting more sleep during the closures, and 55 percent of respondents reported a positive impact on their ability to function. Mr. Small said that 21 percent said it had a negative impact on their ability to function, and suggested that it could be due to a lack of structure. Mr. Epstein said some of the responses students said that they are getting up at 10:00 a.m. and asked if remote school started before then. Ms. Bailey said teachers often schedule later in the morning as students are more likely to show up.

Mayor's Update

Mayor Spicer said that they continue to track what is going on as a City during the time of COVID 19 and through tracking it seems that it is not community spread and they are able to target where some of the influx of cases come from. She encourages everyone to continue with masks and social distancing, and they are trying to see what the reopening plan will look like. She encouraged members to help promote constituents to fill out the census, especially in districts 7, 8, and 9 where responses have been lower, and talked about the importance of the census as it impacts the resources we have available. She said that the budget is an arduous process, and has never been worked on in the middle of a pandemic, and what is making it even remotely manageable is that we are talking to each other. She said that the budget submitted on April 30th was based on a different set of data, she has since submitted a revised budget on Monday which reflected some new data, and they continue to analyze the data daily to see what we have for resources.

Vote to Submit Nominations for the MA Association of School Committee's (MASC) 2020

Awards and Resolutions

Mr. Freudberg read the nominations that were sent in by members which included nominations from Beverly Hugo for MASC Friend of Public Education Award to Sarah Bowers, MASC

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Outstanding School Partner to Kathy McGrath, Community Leader for Public Education to Nicole Messier Doak, nomination from Scott Wadland and Karen Dempsey for Community Leader for Public Education Award to Richard Finlay, and nomination from Adam Freudberg for Beverly Hugo for Lifetime Achievement.

Motion: To accept the collective list of nominations.

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

Ms. Hugo said that the resolutions are not due until July 1st and asked for them to be put on the next meeting's agenda.

Vote for Re-Appointment of Superintendent Dr. Tremblay for 2020-21 to the ACCEPT Board of Directors

Motion: To reappoint Dr. Tremblay for 2020-21 to the ACCEPT Board of Directors.

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

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. Epstein said that he will be looking to plan a Finance and Operations meeting as discussed earlier in the meeting, and said that all warrants were signed.

Ms. Hugo said that there was a Teaching and Learning Subcommittee meeting where they discussed phase 3 of remote learning, budget implications of COVID 19 on phase 4 and a post secondary report. She said that the next meeting will be held on June 8th about the Bilingual Education Department. She said in the last meeting one fact that should be talked about in the future is that the average guidance counselor ratio is 1:250 and we have 1:300.

*Ms. Maskell was disconnected from the meeting due to technical difficulties.

Motion: To approve the minutes of April 15, 2020.

Moved: Ms. Sousa **Seconded:** Mr. Labarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (7-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Wadland, Freudberg, Sousa, Epstein, Barnhill, LaBarge.)

*Ms Maskell reconnected to the meeting.

Additional Public Comment

Gerry Bloomfield said that he is interested in key dates of reopening in the fall and backing up to where we are now. He said he wants to know the date that the final edition of the FY21 budget was submitted and when it will be discussed for approval and whether or not in that timeline we will get some state guidance as to social distancing, face masks, etc. in terms of staff and teachers and students. He said that we should try and get the information before final submission of the budget.

Mr. Freudberg said that we met the deadline under the City Charter for submission of the budget, and are working with the Mayor and City Council on a coordinated city approach with adjustments discussed tonight that were also presented to the City Council last week. He said that we are continuing to track and adjust, yet the next budget decision per charter is now with the City Council.

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Ms. Maskell said that the Policy Subcommittee meeting will be on June 4th and will be the first meeting with MASC to review the policies.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

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

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:46 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

MASC Award Recipient Descriptions

McKibben Report Memo from Superintendent

McKibben Demographic Report Slides

Distribution of New Students Data from the Parent Information Center

Student Enrollment Data from the Parent Information Center

FPS Current Enrollment in Apartments

Budget Memo

FY21 Budget Slides for City Council Meeting

Updated FY21 School Department Operating Budget Request Slides

FY21 Positions Placed on Hold Due to COVID-19

FY21 Budget Resolution

Approved FY21 Budget Resolution

Student Advisory Committee Sleep Survey

MASC 2020 Nominations

Warrants

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