



Framingham Public Schools

Robert A. Tremblay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Adam Freudberg, Chair • Gloria Pascual, Vice Chair • Tracey Bryant, Clerk
Noval Alexander • Geoffrey Epstein • Richard A. Finlay
Beverly Hugo • Tiffanie Maskell • Scott Wadland
Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE: OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: December 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Memorial Building-Blumer Room
150 Concord Street, Framingham

MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Adam Freudberg

PRESENT: Noval Alexander
Tracey Bryant
Geoffrey Epstein
Richard A. Finlay
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
Tiffanie Maskell
Gloria Pascual
Scott Wadland
Mayor Yvonne Spicer

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Nicholas Smart, Chair of Student Advisory Committee
Jessica Barnhill, School Committee Member Elect
Karen Dempsey, School Committee Member Elect
William LaBarge, School Committee Member Elect
Priscila Sousa, School Committee Member Elect
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Mary Ellen Kelly, Framingham Chief Financial Officer

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

Call to Order

The Chair announced that this meeting was being broadcast live on local cable, as well as for later playback, and on Facebook Live. He said that the Committee met in executive session prior to this meeting to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or 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 pursuant to G.L c. 30A, § 21(a)(3), specifically for Units A, S, and T and also the Chair announced that the Committee also met in Executive Session on December 4, 2019 to review updates to previously made redactions move forward for Open Session approvals. He said that at that meeting pursuant to MGL, the committee is in the process of periodically reviewing previously redacted minutes: April 3, 2018, April 25, 2018, May 2, 2018, June 6, 2018, July 18, 2018, August 1, 2018, September 5, 2018, September 17, 2018, October 3, 2018, October 17, 2018, November 13, 2018, February 6, 2019, March 12, 2019, April 24, 2019, May 1, 2019, June 19, 2019, July 17, 2019, August 7, 2019, August 21, 2019, September 4, 2019, and September 18, 2019; 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 November 13, 2019; To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or 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 pursuant to G.L c. 30A, § 21(a)(3), specifically for Unit A and Unit T; To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto pursuant to G.L c. 30A, § 21(a)(4); and To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of a real property as the Chair declared that an Open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(6), specifically in regards to Framingham Public School's lease with the Tutor Perini Corporation located at 73 Mt. Wayte Avenue. He said that there are three members who are going to join the meeting in progress: Mr. Wadland due to a family commitment, and Mr. Alexander and Ms. Bryant noted that they are on their way.

Public Comment

FTA President Chirs Muloroney said she came to speak to the concerns that they have brought forward months ago that continue to affect our educators and students, such as the resources needed to support student success - academically and social emotionally. She spoke about a survey that teachers completed with the amount of assaults and classroom evacuations they are reporting. She said that these issues have been discussed at the building and district level and educators should be trusted and listened to as they are the ones who know what students need and have the professional opinions. She spoke about wanting to move forward in 2020 in a collaborative effort.

FTA Secretary Lisa Zanella spoke about planning and preparation periods importance to teachers and how they contribute to the quality of teaching, relationships and collaboration, and teacher health. She spoke about an article that she read by Kyleen Gray titled "Dear Administrators please stop taking away teachers planning periods". She said that teachers now have less prep time than ever, and are feeling frustrated and disrespected. She said that the survey shows an alarming rate of student behaviors in the past few years, and there is an

urgency to better prepare for these students, but with less prep time to do so. She said they have told us how the District can support them over the past three months at these meetings.

Co-President of Stapleton PTO Nicki Atchison spoke about her child being injured by another student, and says that Stapleton has a behavioral and safety problem. She said that students and teachers are being verbally and physically assaulted, there are frequent evacuations which lead to students learning being disrupted. She said that a lot of parents were not aware of the extent of these problems until the parent forum. She said that they were told this is a priority, but asks why students have been added, but no additional staff. She said that the District spread misinformation; such as staffing in the speciality program and no additional students being added. She asks to know what is being done right now.

Meredith Wolff spoke about her children's experiences at Stapleton and said that there is rapidly changing administration year to year. She said that her daughter was assaulted this year and targeted, and had been telling adults, but was scared to do so in recent situations. She said that this stress has changed her behaviors at home, and her skills at school are not growing due to behaviors and interruptions in the classroom. She said that there is a need for additional staff in each classroom, and parents should be notified when children are assaulted or if they witness a teacher being assaulted.

Tyler Waterfall said that he has children at Stapleton and is deeply troubled by the pattern of violence and disruptive behaviors he has been noticing at an increasing scale. He spoke about his children's experiences of being assaulted or frightened. He said that he has spoken to families who have moved their kids from Stapleton due to their kids not feeling safe, and other parents are saying safety is not being addressed by the administration. He said that this needs to be addressed with more effective measures; teachers have asked for more staff to meet the increasing needs, and so far have seen zero response to that.

Anne C. Sullivan spoke about the Superintendent's requirement that all elementary teachers submit detailed lesson plans. She said that she is here to support teachers in opposition of this requirement, and should consider the impact on teachers. She said that the superintendent should make good decisions to support teachers and this is not one of them. She asked to be sent any research or data from any district that has implemented the use of detailed lesson plans by elementary teachers that then led to improved MCAS scores. She gave a copy of her statement to the Superintendent.

Sarah McKeon gave thanks to the outgoing School Committee members. She said that Dr. Tremblay sent an email saying he was willing to meet with teachers 1:1 for support, and she said he has a staff of many that should also be willing to do this. She said that teachers have already been telling the District what they need at these meetings. She listed many items that students need, as they are the priority, including items for support, busses and staff.

Gerry Bloomfield asked how many times people have to come until there is an action plan. He said that he has been a constant critic of performance over the years, and that the City's problems show no significant improvement. He said that the school has many problems and

are in the news constantly and listed many of the problems he thinks there are. He gave thanks to the outgoing members, and gave advice to the newly elected members.

*Ms. Pascual left the meeting at 7:34 p.m. and returned at 8:09 p.m.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair said that due to public comment he will move things out of order and talk about Stapleton so those in the public can leave afterwards if they wish to. He said he has spoken to the Superintendent about the need to regain trust, and the recommendation that providing data can help do so. Dr. Tremblay spoke in response to public remarks. He referred to the email that he sent to FPS staff over the weekend inviting them to meet with him, and read sections out loud while giving context. He said the email was meant to be seen as an attempt to work collaboratively and meet with any staff that would like to. He said that behaviors are escalating not only just in Framingham, and there is a real mental health crisis. He said he has been spending a lot of time at Stapleton, and asked for feedback from teachers. A Stapleton Teacher asked to make a statement at this time after being invited by the Superintendent to do so. The Chair said he will allow this because she was called on by the Superintendent and it is an important topic, and the last meeting with the current School Committee members.

Jennifer Israeloff said she is a teacher at Stapleton, and spoke to how great the teachers and students are there. She said that there have been changes in the student population, staffing levels and leadership which have been hard. She said that for central administration and the School Committee to solve problems they need to be in the classroom in order to understand the problems. She said that teachers met with the Superintendent and they had been assured that they will be an integral part of staffing and programming within Stapleton.

Dr. Tremblay said many things have been done since the forum and a memo is available online. He said he does realize that there is a need to engage educators more since the forum. He said the challenge is that answers are different from room to room on what is needed, it is hard financially and also to find mid year staffing. He said he has authorized two additional staffing for student support specialists and positions for english language support within the last few days. He said that he feels that problems with the behavioral program is being inflated to other behavioral problems. He said they also redeployed social emotional support staff, and are planning for training teachers with intervention strategies. He said that at Stapleton the redeploying of other district staff from other sites as some parents suggested can be taking away critical support at certain levels which leads to other behaviors. He said there is a need to put everything back in the right house - programs where they need to go and classroom supports, which is a big fix to happen midyear. He said that it may seem like there are more behaviors due to the school trying to communicate more about what is happening; so they are getting better at reporting.

Discussion with the Chief Financial Officer on the Capital Budget, as well as the Status of the Request for Bussing Process/Data

Framingham Chief Financial Officer Mary Ellen Kelly went over the five year view of the City's capital projects, information on what is within the FY21 Capital Budget including what was

recommended and what was deferred within the school department, and FY21 Energy and Sustainability projects.

Questions. Mr. Wadland said that the total request by listed for the school department of \$7.5 million is incorrect, as the vote the School Committee took in October was to request \$5.1 million and deferring some of the projects. He asked why the City switched some of the school's priorities, as all of the requests were proposed by the Director of Building and Grounds Matt Torti, vetted by the Facilities Subcommittee, and then vetted and voted on by the full School Committee. Ms. Kelly said that they also look at code compliance, and the codes related to ADA and fire alarm upgrades trumped the air conditioning. She said that the paving project is not necessarily making it code compliant. Mr. Wadland said there was rationale that was vetted about the code compliance being deferred, and the parking lot project is important as it sets up for the possibility of a PPA for a solar canopy on the parking lot. Mr. Finlay said the parking lot project keeps getting deferred, and deferred projects will continue to increase in the amount needed to complete the longer they are deferred. Mr. Epstein asked if all the deferred projects are causing an issue, and if we are underinvesting in the capital infrastructure in general. Ms. Kelly some they have made some progress in some areas; generally not making overall progress or gaining, but not falling behind as far as we used to. She said it is always a difficult decision with the need to try and balance all the requests, needs and try to fund the highest priorities. Mr. Freudberg asked what the process would be for the School Committee to ask that the school department capital projects be looked at again and change what was presented for resubmission, as Ms. Kelly has offered that opportunity. Ms. Kelly and Mr. Lynch agreed to work together with their departments to look at this and will be on the agenda again for early in 2020.

*Mr. Finlay let the meeting at 8:50 p.m. and returned at 8:56 p.m.

Mr. Freudberg said that the committee has asked for better bussing data regarding what worked and what didn't with the decision in the past to privatizing busses. He said that the committee would like to look at what was actually saved versus what was actually projected, and what it would take and cost to own the bussing and drivers again. Ms. Kelly said the City never owned the busses, they did have their own bus drivers and covered their benefits and unfunded liabilities. Mr. Freudberg said that they need her and Mr. Lynch's team help come up with a plan to get outstanding data to be able to make future decisions. He said this was not to yet decide one way or another, but that we need this data before we decide any next steps relating to the next transportation provider. Ms. Kelly said that completing a study such as Worcester did may require someone who has more expertise such as a transportation consultant. She added that the number of drivers has increased since they were privatized. Mr. Lynch said they can work on a rough estimate for apples to apples on the costs and report back in a month or six weeks.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Tremblay said the **Student Achievement Update** is looking back on all of the efforts and achievements that went on in the past year. He said that it is important as members transition off that the district is compliant with **retention of records**, which they are as they are retained indefinitely using Google Vault. Ms. Pascual said after listening to public comment, she had questions such as: do we have a record of the issues that were described tonight - such as

incident reports, can the committee be given data on the number of issues teachers submit across the district, what tracking system is used with incidents at **Stapleton**, a report on what is happening to be able to see trends, what the student to teacher ratio is in the Emotional Disability Program, and a list of each school and the programs that each school has. Dr. Tremblay said he will look into the data that is available and how it can be reported on and that much of this is already available and has been provided. He said that Stapleton uses SWIS the Student Warning Information System. He said that it sounds like some of the staff within the Emotional Disability Program are being deployed, which will need to be looked at with directors. Ms. Bryant said that the administration needs to have a real and honest conversation with the teachers at Stapleton regarding what is happening and what answers there can be. She said that that it is hard for students to focus and for teachers to teach as well as keep an eye out for signs of early behaviors. Dr. Tremblay said he is not condoning aggressive behavior, and there is a need to be in a better place where we can get ahead of it before students are that out of control. He said that he is looking to enlist parents in this work, so the message is the same within the school and at home.

Mr. Lynch went over transportation information and bus routes that they travel on a daily basis. He said that he is hoping to be able to give updates to families on a monthly basis such as he did recently with items on communication. He said that they will continue to be using Blackboard messaging and working on an application for tracking busses; this will be rolling out at one school and hopefully to the rest in February. Ms. Pascual asked for Mr. Lynch to provide more information on what the routes are within the maps, the times started and ended, and what the different acronyms mean. Ms. Pascual asked about the fees collected from the other schools. Mr. Lynch said they are mandated to provide transportation to students within the City limits including charter and private schools, and they are charged the same fee as students who attend Framingham Public Schools. Mr. Epstein said that within the Finance and Operations subcommittee meeting they took a vote, to bring to the full committee, to send a letter to Durham letting them know that they are in breach of contract. He said that the subcommittee discussed the loss of instructional time on students when arriving late, and the safety issue of standing on the street in cold weather.

Motion: To support sending the letter to Durham, transmitted by our attorneys, to let them know they are in breach of contract.

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg said the letter speaks of still trying to collaborate with Durham, but if things do not improve by the end of January financial penalties are on the table which are outlined in the letter, as well as going out to bid early before the contract ends. He said that the City Solicitor said this is on solid legal footing. Members spoke in support of this, and the problems that have happened, and what has already been attempted to try and fix this problem.

Moved: Mr. Epstein

Seconded: Ms. Hugo

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mr. Lynch said that with the **FY20 YTD Budget** report it is on a good pace as far as spending and encumbrances. He said that one line that is over budget is the Occupational Education line, which is for students that wish to enroll in a vocational program that Keefe Tech can not offer. He said that the District pays tuition and transportation for those students. He said that there are funds in the Business Operations line within the undistributed line for instances such as this. He said that the **food services negative balance** is under \$46,000, which compared to last year

is lower by about \$9,500. He said that the straight line projections that were used in the past did not seem to be true projections, and he is going to work on a formula and charts with historical data versus current data with Mr. Epstein. He said that they will continue the program to respectfully collect negative balances - he said the replies have not been very high. He said that the Free and Reduced Lunch percentages include paper applications and direct certification under any government programs, and for this year 53.9% of the district population is included.

Mr. Lynch said that Human Resources is reporting that they are not getting as many **substitute teachers** as they would like, only an 81% fill rate. He said that they are proposing to start an increase in pay for each amount per day by \$10.00 to start on January 2, 2020. He said they will then look to see if this should be changed for FY21. He said the increases for this year can be funded from where the district is saving in leaves of absences.

Motion: To approve the recommended increase in substitute pay.

Moved: Mr. Wadland **Seconded:** Ms. Bryant **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Mr. Lynch presented the scope of work for the FY19 student activity account audit that was introduced briefly in a past meeting.

Motion: To adopt the scope of work for the FY19 student activity account audit as presented.

Moved: Mr. Finlay **Seconded:** Mr. Wadland **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Superintendent's Mid-Year Progress Report on Goals

Dr. Tremblay said that due to time, this can be on another agenda for the new members coming in, but wanted to get any feedback from outgoing members. He said that one of the challenges for the chronic absenteeism goal is if busses can't pick students up to get them to school and families have to go to work which causes students to not be able to get to school - how do we hold them accountable when we can't fulfill our obligation to have the bus on time. He said that the district is currently trending at 87% persistence rate with attendance.

Vote on the 2019 Evaluation of the School Committee's Executive Assistant

Motion: To accept the summative evaluation of the Executive Assistant for the School Committee which is comprised of those members who submitted their evaluations per the deadline.

Moved: Mr. Wadland **Seconded:** Mr. Finlay **Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

Subcommittee Reports

Policy Subcommittee

Motion: To refer a request by PTO members for a District Wide Communications Process on School Occurrences and Remote Participation to the Policy Subcommittee.

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

Discussion: Members discussed the reasoning for remote participation for being referred, which was described so that the committee can set rules for remote participation and how to implement the Mayor's new policy.

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Finance and Operations. Mr. Epstein said that warrants were all signed. He said that there has been a problem with payroll being delivered on time, he suggested at looking to integrate payroll in future. Mr. Freudberg said that the current warrant signers will remain until a future vote. **Accountability and Student Achievement.** Ms. Hugo says the subcommittee met recently and went over the Johns Hopkins Curriculum report which will be available for everyone for review, and also received an introduction and update from the new SAGE Director. Mr. Finlay gave thanks to the **Facilities Subcommittee** and all that they have achieved, and Ms. Pascual gave thanks to the **Racial Equity Subcommittee** and all they have achieved.

Referral to Legal Counsel for a Response to a R. Alexander Open Meeting Law Complaint Dated December 4, 2019

Motion: To refer the Open Meeting Law complaint filed by Mr. Alexander to School Committee counsel, working with the Chair, to draft a response.

Moved: Ms. Maskell **Seconded:** Mr. Wadland

Discussion: Ms. Pascual said that there have been several complaints from Mr. Alexander and asks the committee to take this seriously. Mr. Freudberg said that the committee followed the OML process flawlessly and will respond with the facts and cited state guidance showing the committee acted by following rules. Mr. Epstein said these are simply complaints that anyone has the right to file, yet they are not violations and a lot of them seem quite frivolous.

Vote: 7-2-0 (Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Wadland, Freudberg, Alexander, Epstein, Maskell. No: Bryant, Pascual).

Approval of Grants/Gifts/Field Trips

It was discussed that some of the subcommittee minutes that are listed on the agenda were not completed, so to be removed from the vote. This included two Finance, one Accountability, and three Racial Equity which will be approved separately.

Motion: For consent agenda of the minutes and gifts listed on the agenda, except for the ones discussed.

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

Discussion: Ms. Bryant asked for the November 13, 2019 Open Session minutes to be voted on separately.

Amended Motion: For consent agenda for approval of Executive Session minutes, subcommittee minutes and gifts.

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Motion: To approve and accept Updated Redactions as approved in Executive Session as part of the periodic review to determine whether continued non-disclosure is warranted: April 3, 2018, April 25, 2018, May 2, 2018, June 6, 2018, July 18, 2018, August 1, 2018, September 5, 2018, September 17, 2018, October 3, 2018, October 17, 2018, November 13, 2018, February 6, 2019,

March 12, 2019, April 24, 2019, May 1, 2019, June 19, 2019, July 17, 2019, August 7, 2019, August 21, 2019, September 4, 2019, and September 18, 2019, Subcommittee Minutes: Temporary Subcommittee to Study Options to Develop Transcripts of Minutes: January 10, 2019, SIFOC Applicant Review Subcommittee: February 21, 2019 and March 4, 2019, Communications Subcommittee: September 23, 2019, Digital Infrastructure Subcommittee: November 28, 2018 and February 26, 2019, Policy Subcommittee: August 28, 2019, Gifts:

\$50,000 for AP Testing from Anonymous Donor, \$12.50 from WAITT for Early Childhood Alliance, \$100.00 from Lueders Environmental, Inc. for field trips and educational materials (non-curriculum).

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Motion: To approve the November 13, 2019 Open Session Minutes.

Moved: Ms. Bryant

Seconded: Mr. Epstein

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Farewell Remarks from Outgoing School Committee Members

Members Gloria Pascual, Tracey Bryant, Noval Alexander, and Richard Finlay spoke about their experience on the committee, the work they have accomplished and gave thanks to staff, community, and other members, and advice to the committee going forward. Mr. Alexander asked that his written remarks be submitted into the record.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. Finlay

Seconded: Ms. Bryant

Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

School Department Capital Plan Proposal

FY21 Capital Plan

FY21 Capital Plan Slides

Stapleton Support Plan

Student Achievement Update: 2019 in Review

Transportation Update

Town Slides on Transportation from 2011

Worcester Study on Transportation

Notice of Breach of Contract to Durham

FY20 YTD Budget

Food Services Statistics

FY20 Substitute Pay Rates

FY19 Student Activity Account Audit Scope of Work

Superintendent's Mid-Year Progress Report on Goals

Executive Assistant Summative Review and Evaluation Data

Evaluation Received After the Summative was Completed

Policy Summary

Warrants

OML Complaint

November 13, 2019 Open Session Draft Minutes

Subcommittee Minutes

Transcription Draft Minutes

Policy Draft Minutes

Gifts

Noval Alexander Farewell Remarks

These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee in Open Session on January 29, 2020.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on February 3, 2020.