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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Priscila Sousa, Chair • Jessica Barnhill, Vice Chair • Richard A. Finlay, Clerk
Adam Freudberg • Beverly Hugo • William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell • Jennifer Moshe • Valerie Ottaviani
Charlie Sisitsky, Mayor

Farley Building, 19 Flagg Drive, Framingham, MA 01702
Telephone: 508-626-9121 | www.framingham.k12.ma.us/schoolcommittee

SCHOOL COMMITTEE: OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: January 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Remote
MEETING CALLED BY: Beverly Hugo
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Richard A. Finlay
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Jennifer Moshe
Valerie Ottaviani
Priscila Sousa
Mayor Charlie Sisitsky
ABSENT: None
ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Joanna Hastry, Executive Assistant for the School Committee

Call to Order

Ms. Hugo called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and noted all in attendance. She said that per the City Charter she is named as the presiding officer to lead this reorganization meeting as the member with the longest time served in office. She said that this meeting is being broadcast live on the Government Channel and can be viewed Live on Facebook on the Framingham Public Schools Facebook Page.

Election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Clerk

Ms. Hugo said that according to the City Charter the first meeting following an election a reorganization of the School Committee takes place to elect officers. She asked if there were any nominations for Chair.

Motion: To nominate Priscila Sousa as Chair of the School Committee.

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

Motion: To nominate Adam Freudberg as Chair of the School Committee.

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

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Discussion: Mr. Freudberg said that he was thankful for the nomination and if it was the will of the full committee he would accept it, and noted that four years is a long time to be Chair. He said that he would encourage the committee to focus on the rules to follow as a governing body and to be transparent. He spoke to all of the achievements over the past four years. He said that he respectfully declines the nomination and asks for the nomination to be withdrawn. He said that he has created a transition memo which will be shared with all members. Motion **withdrawn**.

Motion: To close nominations for the Chair.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Mr. Finlay **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Roll Call Vote for nomination of Ms. Sousa as Chair: 8-0-1

(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge. Abstained: Maskell)

Ms. Hugo switched seats with the new Chair Ms. Sousa and Ms. Sousa became the presiding officer for the remainder of the meeting.

Mayor Sisitsky swore Ms. Sousa in as the School Committee Chair.

Ms. Sousa thanked members for the nomination. She spoke to her experience coming to Framingham from Brazil, having to learn English, and her education in Framingham Public Schools. She spoke of her experience as a guardian having to navigate Special Education services and how there is still more work to do in that area. She said that being trilingual she will be able to help families.

Ms. Sousa asked if there were any nominations for Vice Chair.

Motion: To nominate Jessica Barnhill as Vice Chair of the School Committee.

Moved: Mr. Finlay **Seconded:** Mr. Freudberg

Motion: To close nominations for Vice Chair.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Hugo **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Roll Call Vote for Ms. Barnhill as Vice Chair: Unanimous (9-0-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Mayor Sisitsky swore Ms. Barnhill in as School Committee Vice Chair.

Ms. Sousa asked if there were any nominations for Clerk.

Motion: To nominate Richard A. Finlay as Clerk for the School Committee.

Moved: Ms. Ottaviani **Seconded:** Ms. Moshe

Motion: To nominate William LaBarge as Clerk for the School Committee.

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

Motion: To close nominations for Clerk for the School Committee.

Moved: Ms. Barnhill **Seconded:** Ms. Moshe **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

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Roll Call Vote for William LaBarge as Clerk for the School Committee: 4 (Yes: Hugo, Freudberg, Maskell, LaBarge)

Roll Call Vote for Richard A. Finlay as Clerk for the School Committee: 5 (Yes: Finlay, Moshe, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill)

Mr. Finlay elected Clerk by a 5-4 vote.

Mayor Sisitsky swore Mr. Finlay as Clerk for the School Committee.

State Ethics Law and Open Meeting Law Compliance

Ms. Sousa said that provided on each desk for members is a form from the Attorney General's Division of Open Government for them to sign and return to the City Clerk, and all members have been provided the materials on the Open Meeting Law. She said that members will also be receiving a link to read through the State Ethics Law materials and will need to take a test and submit the online certificate by next week.

Re-establishment of the Temporary Subcommittee on Rules and Administration

Ms. Sousa said that the committee has automatically set up the creation of this subcommittee to reconvene at the start of each term. She said that anyone who is interested in serving on it should let her know of their interest, and she will appoint up to four members by early next week.

Public comment

FTA President Christine Mulrone said that the FTA is committed to maintaining in person learning while also promoting the health and safety of our students, educators, and families which is difficult to achieve with the recent surge in COVID-19. She spoke to the difficulties which included that not all staff were available to receive the rapid testing distribution over the weekend, staffing in buildings is limited due to staff needing to quarantine or isolate which leads to concerns of supervision of all students, there is noncompliance with mask wearing with students, the CDC's decision to reduce the amount of time to isolate at home to five days is concerning and puts families and children at risk of exposure, there are concerns that at home tests are not as simple for families to use, and there was faulty information from DESE about K-95 masks that were provided to staff. She spoke to nurses and educators being overwhelmed and the need for remedies to the difficulties, as well as teachers being informed of positive cases in their classrooms and communication on the layout of classrooms for physical distancing.

Dhurba Sen said that he is inviting everyone to the Vigil for Democracy tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. in downtown Framingham. He said that this is to remember the events at the Capital last year. He spoke to the organizations that are involved in this event including the League of Women Voters.

Nicole Doak said that cloth and paper masks are not effective against the Omicron variant of COVID-19 so the Framingham Coronavirus Community Outreach group has launched an initiative to collect monetary and mask donations to distribute to Framingham public school students in need. She said that students will receive four masks, and they have already distributed 250 masks in the last two days since starting. She said that they will not be able to

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sustain this so asks that the City and School Committee consider providing masks for our students, as the effective ones against Omicron are pricey.

Heather Gonzalez said that she is concerned with the mental health of students and spoke to an email that was sent from a FPS staff that said that students who are caught in physical altercations will be issued the maximum consequences allowed up to and including suspension, expulsion, and charges by the police department. She said that staff and students must be kept safe, but that includes students who are struggling, there should be emphasis on proactive measures to avoid confrontations and restorative justice practices. She said that she is requesting information on how many students have been suspended long term, permanently expelled and arrested or charged by the Framingham police this school year, what schools those students attend, and their race, ethnicity, and gender.

Dr. Tremblay spoke to some of the previous comments and said that he consults regularly with the Department of Public Health and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. He said that in coordination with the Department of Public Health he issued a statement today for a pause on non-essential school activities such as extracurricular activities. Mr. Freudberg asked for clarification on an email that was sent out with unclear language in regards to the policy that is in place requiring pooled testing and Test and Stay. Dr. Tremblay said that Test and Stay is still occurring, but does not apply to fully vaccinated individuals, and they are trying to reduce the number of samples in pool testing in order to be able to follow up with any positive pools for additional tests. He said they have to constantly change and reallocate resources to where problems may be.

Seat Assignment Drawing

Ms. Sousa noted that the seats for the Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, Mayor, Superintendent and Student Advisory Representative would remain the same. Ms. Hugo, at Ms. Sousa's request, drew names out of a bag for the order of selection of seats. Members chose their seats as names were drawn. Ms. Hugo chose the seat next to the Superintendent, Ms. Moshe chose the seat next to Ms. Hugo, Ms. Maskell chose the seat next to the Student Advisory Representative, Mr. Freudberg chose the seat two seats from the Clerk, Mr. LaBarge chose the seat next to the Clerk, and Ms. Ottaviani chose the seat next to Ms. Maskell.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Certificate of Receipt of Open Law Meeting Materials

2020 Rules and Administration Subcommittee Report

Chair Transition Memo