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Framingham
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
School Committee

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 • Geoffrey Epstein • Richard A. Finlay
Beverly Hugo • William LaBarge • Scott Wadland
Yvonne M. Spicer, 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: December 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Remote
MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Adam Freudberg
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Geoffrey Epstein
Richard A. Finlay
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Priscila Sousa
Scott Wadland
Mayor Yvonne Spicer*
ABSENT: None
ALSO PRESENT: Jennifer Moshe, Member-Elect, District 3
Valerie Ottiviani, Member-Elect, District 6
Charlie Sisitsky, Mayor-Elect
Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Nilufar Noorian, Student Advisory Chair
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
Joanna Hastry, Executive Assistant for the School Committee

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and noted all in attendance. He noted that this meeting was being held remotely for the public in accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Actions Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, he announced those in attendance, and noted that School Committee members Priscila Sousa, Geoffrey Epstein and Jessica Barnhill, and Student Advisory Committee Chair Nilfuar Noorian were

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attending remotely. He noted that Member-Elects Jennifer Moshe and Valerie Ottaviani and Mayor Elect Charlie Sisitsky were also joining this meeting. 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 Zoom. He said that Facebook comments are not the formal way to participate in public comment since there are voice options through Zoom. He asked for a moment of silence to think about all those lost and who are suffering in our community, nation, state, nation, and world.

Public Comment

Jill Weller said that she was the Communication Chair for the FTA and speaking on behalf of the Executive Board. She said that the District's decision to continue notifying all, regardless of vaccination status, if they are close contacts and reverse the previous decision is in the best interest of the District. She said that we are in the midst of bargaining a new contract and issues of compensation are one of the final parts. She said that we should be considering what would attract and maintain the best educators and what currently is being offered will not do either. She said that we seem to have an administration heavy school district and are leaving those who give direct services to students without adequate compensation. She said that we need to commit to hiring substitute teachers and spoke to Classroom Aides not being enough.

Amy Finstein said that she is a parent of two students and said that she has seen the real life implications of the District's COVID-19 policies. She said that her two children tested positive and the District and school still have not contacted them to contact trace, since they were vaccinated they were not notified about being a close contact, and were not allowed to test in the nurse's office when not feeling well. She said she is glad that the decision on contact tracing has been changed to allow for all whether vaccinated or not. She said that there needs to be a specific and actionable plan for the return to school in January knowing that there may be people traveling, that there should be incentives for testing and vaccinations, and suggested that there be vaccine clinics.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair noted that the School Committee met earlier tonight in Executive Session to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(4), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining because an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declared pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3), specifically for Units A, B, C, N, S, & T, and 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 March 31, 2021 Building and Grounds Executive Session.

Remarks from the Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

SAC Chair Nilufar Noorian said that the high school will be having a Winter Spirit Week for all grades which was organized by members of the Student Government. She spoke to the Superintendent Dr. Tremblay leading town halls on environmental topics for students at the high school yesterday. She said that the SAC will be meeting to decide on their next presentation topic.

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Transition Update from Mayor-Elect Charlie Sisitsky

Mayor-Elect Sisitsky spoke of how there needs to be a team effort in order to benefit the City. He said that he has established 9 different committees who are helping advise him with the transition and he has been interviewing for the vacant administration positions. He said that the COVID-19 situation is only getting worse and need to be careful about large gatherings so the Inauguration will be a small event, but members do need to get sworn in in person and cannot be sworn in remotely. Ms. Sousa asked if while he is filling positions if he is seeing any redundancies. Mayor-Elect Sisitsky said that there is a consultant looking at any options of combining different departments for efficiencies, but the positions he is filling are key positions such as the Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor's Update and Farewell Remarks

Mayor Spicer requested her section be moved up due to needing to leave the meeting early. She spoke about all the hard work the School Committee and Dr. Tremblay has done, and spoke to her time being an Ex-Officio member of the School Committee. She encouraged everyone to get vaccinated as we now have the tools we did not have a year ago. She said going forward she would ask the School Committee to think of the community in its entirety and all the needs that need to be addressed. She said that we have a responsibility to model behaviors such as respect, and issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion were probably the most trying conversations during her time as a School Committee member, and at times she left feeling embarrassed and disappointed by statements being made by leaders. She suggested that the Mayor's Update be earlier in the meeting, to try and cut down the length of meetings, and to keep all of the children of Framingham at the forefront.

Superintendent's Update

COVID-19

Dr. Tremblay gave an update regarding COVID-19 including that masks are still required, families should speak to their children about the proper way to wear a mask, and that in order to consider not having to wear masks the District would need to be at 95% vaccinated. He said that the current numbers are 86% of staff vaccinated, but only 66% of students in the high school. He said that the District is still doing pooled testing, and per DESE for Test and Stay they do not allow testing for vaccinated individuals, so if the District were to do that they would have to fund it themselves. He said that remote learning is not an option as it does not count towards the 180 days, spoke to concerns with vaccination mandates leading to staff leading, and spoke to the stress on staff and time for contact tracing. Members spoke to the importance of vaccinations and thanked the COVID team for all their work. Mr. Freudberg asked if there was any consideration to ramp up testing opportunities or communication to get tested with winter break coming up. Dr. Tremblay said they will be hosting vaccination clinics in January for young students and booster clinics for older students in coordination with community partners.

Mid-Year Report on the Superintendent's Goals

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The Chair said that there will be an end of the year report on the Superintendent's goals in June and his evaluation is based on these goals. Dr. Tremblay said his goals document includes hyperlinks that show the progress and evidence towards his goals. He gave a highlight of his progress on his goals of District Improvement Goal: Fostering Belonging & Partnership with Students and Families , Professional Practice Goal: Continuing our Journey to Becoming an Anti-Racist District, and Student Learning Goal: Progress Monitoring Student Engagement & Learning in Partnership with Staff and Administrators that included updates on the Welcome Center, the roll out of the Code of Character, Conduct, and Support, and professional training to analyze data trends.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Update

Transportation/Busing Updates

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Lincoln Lynch said that there is not an updated transportation report for this meeting but he hopes to have an extensive one for the January 19th meeting. He said that he is working with NRT to clear up items and provide more detail that has been asked at previous meetings. He said that there are still 67 buses as of now and VanPool is fully staffed. Ms. Maskell asked for additional information to be added to the updates including information on how new drivers are assigned to routes and the time and number of how many buses are late for afternoon pickup.

FY22 Operating and Capital Budget

Mr. Lynch said that the FY22 YTD was included in the packets. There were no questions.

10 Minute Break/Recess

The Chair called for a five minute recess at 8:12 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 8:18 p.m.

Annual Evaluation of the School Committee's Executive Assistant

The Chair thanked all members for submitting their feedback on time.

Motion: To accept the annual evaluation of the School Committee's Executive Assistant.

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

Discussion: Members discussed and thanked the Executive Assistant for the work that she has completed this year.

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

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

Review School Committee Goals from 2020-21 Term

The Chair said that the packet included an updated document to show evidence with hyperlinks for the School Committee's goals. He said that this document is a good starting point for goals in 2022.

*Mayor Spicer left the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Farewell Remarks by Outgoing School Committee Members

Mr. Wadland said that he has served almost five years on the School Committee and gave thanks for those who supported him such as the voters, Dr. Tremblay and his team, and those

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who invited him to all the student events, events which were reminders of why we commit ourselves to this work in the first place. He spoke to all the achievements that occurred during this time as a member including increasing access to athletics by eliminating fees, making sure students have access to meals regardless of their financial status, replacing a school with the new Fuller Middle School, and approval of artificial turf fields which will provide the community more access to safe playing fields. He thanked members for working towards the greater good instead of personal self interest and said that he intends to remain active in the community although in less visible roles. A round of applause was given.

Mr. Epstein said that a lot has been achieved and there is a lot of work ahead. He said becoming a City changed the whole dynamic and atmosphere and members had to work together in a collegial way. He gave thanks to the Chair and said that he has been the best chair he has ever worked with. He spoke to running and funding the flyer campaign for the Fuller Middle School debt inclusion vote, being involved in the policy ending lunch shaming, and being a warrant signer with Ms. Maskell. He said that there have been unprecedented budget battles with the City for the past four years and the problems ahead of us include the zero annual tax levy increase that ultimately leads to zero COLAs and the \$4.4 million hole in the school budget. He said that it has been an honor and privilege to serve and he has learned from everyone here. A round of applause was given.

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. LaBarge said that the warrants were signed with a total of \$1,401,884.40 and payroll total of \$4,447,030.12 on December 6, 2021.

Ms. Maskell, as the Policy Subcommittee Chair, said that the policies on the agenda are up for a second reading.

Motion: To approve Policies FA: Facilities Development Goals, FA-E: Facilities Development Goals, and FBB: Enrollment Projections for Facilities Planning for second readings.

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

Approval of Minutes and Gifts and Adjournment

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of November 10, 2021, Rules and Administration Subcommittee minutes of January 23, 2020, Building and Grounds Subcommittee minutes of February 11, 2021 Joint Meeting and March 31, 2021 Executive Session, SIFOC Applicant Review Subcommittee minutes of August 27, 2020, Racial Equity Subcommittee minutes of October 15, 2019, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Subcommittee minutes of June 17, 2020 and September 22, 2020 and adjourn.

Moved: Mr. Wadland **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (9-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Finlay, Wadland, Freudberg, Sousa, Epstein, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)
The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Vaccination Update

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Mid-Year Report on Superintendent's Goals

Transportation Update from 12.08.21

FY22 YTD

Annual Evaluation of the School Committee's Executive Assistant

Review of School Committee Goals from 2021-21 Term

Warrants

Policy Second Readings

Draft November 10, 2021 School Committee Minutes

Draft August 27, 2020 SIFOC Applicant Review Minutes

Draft Rules and Administration Subcommittee minutes of January 23, 2020

Draft Building and Grounds Subcommittee minutes of February 11, 2021 Joint Meeting and March 31, 2021 Executive Session

Draft Racial Equity Subcommittee minutes of October 15, 2019

Draft Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Subcommittee minutes of June 17, 2020 and September 22, 2020