



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Priscila Sousa, Chair • Jessica Barnhill, Vice Chair
 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: June 15, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Remote
MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Priscila Sousa
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
 Adam Freudberg*
 Beverly Hugo
 William LaBarge
 Tiffanie Maskell*
 Jennifer Moshe
 Valerie Ottaviani
 Priscila Sousa
ABSENT: Mayor Charlie Sisitsky
ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
 Nilufar Noorian, Student Advisory Committee 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 7:02 p.m., announced those in attendance, and noted that School Committee members Tiffanie Maskell and Jennifer Moshe, and Student Advisory Committee Chair Nilufar Noorian were joining remotely, member Adam Freudberg would be joining in progress due to attending a middle school orientation, and Mayor Sisitsky would not be joining due to a conflicting meeting. She said that the meeting is being broadcast live on the Government Channel, can be viewed Live on Facebook on the Framingham Public Schools Facebook Page, and noted information on how to participate in public comment in person and through Zoom. She said that Facebook comments are not the formal way to participate in public comment since there are voice options through Zoom. She 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

Danielle Chirichiello said that she is a Special Education teacher at McCarthy Elementary School and is here representing staff, along with other staff and some parents, to speak about the vote of no confidence the staff took due to the toxic and retaliatory environment the Principal has created. She said that 94% of staff voted in favor of the no confidence vote, the Superintendent was aware that the vote had happened and restorative meetings had taken place where Principal Page was tasked with creating a plan to restore the relationship between herself and staff. She said that the Principal has moved 27 staff to new positions and grade levels, sometimes multiple times, it is hard to work collaboratively if teams keep changing, and teachers have left due to her leadership.

Lisa Zanella said that she is a 3rd grade teacher at McCarthy where there was a 94% favor of the no confidence vote in the Principal, in the last 3 ½ years there has been a turnover of 62 educators, and spoke to her previous time as FTA President where there was a collaborative relationship with the former Principal. She said that the staff are being labeled as tough because the teachers are not afraid to speak up when there are decisions that directly impact their students, they advocate passionately for what their students need to be successful even if it goes against popular opinion, and they should not be retaliated against just because they disagree. She said that they are here to ask for the School Committee's support in rebuilding the teaching and learning environment at McCarthy.

Emily Viti said that as a health teacher she has concerns for the proposed changes in Policy IHAMB including the removal of Grades K-5 being educated about substance abuse and experimentation, some of the edits seem to suggest a focus on drug use issues with the legal system and health consequences without specifying the connection between drug use, abuse, and addiction and mental health issues, and that the policy should mirror the most recent research. She asked that health educators be a part of this conversation before it is implemented.

Jennifer Birch-Israeloff said that she is a union representative at Stapleton Elementary School and is asking for help in providing information on when retroactive salary payments that are owed to teachers under the Unit A MOA that was ratified earlier this year will be given. She said that they have asked and have not been able to get definitive information from the City's payroll department which shows a lack of respect to teachers and the contract that was signed. She asked for this to be investigated and responded to in writing as soon as possible.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair said that the last deadline that was decided upon for the upcoming vacancy for the School Committee's At Large Seat on the Strategic Initiatives and Financial Oversight Committee has passed and there were no applicants. She said that the seat expires on June 30th and as previously approved this will now be posted with no deadline until there are applicants.

Mayor's Update

The Chair said that the Mayor is not present due to a conflicting meeting so there will not be an update tonight.

Remarks from the Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

SAC Advisors Robin McAllister and Jennifer Abreu said that elections were held and there are new SAC members for next year including Nilufar Noorian as the Chair, Hamza Rifki as Vice Chair, and members Emilly Silva, Samuel Perlman, and Jordan Cohen. SAC members Nilufar Noorian, Hamza Rifki, Jordan Cohen and Emily Silva were present and introduced themselves. Ms. McAllister said that they are fortunate to have students on the SAC who speak Spanish and Portuguese who will be able to help with student outreach.

Superintendent's Update

Dr. Tremblay spoke to some of the public comment from earlier including that they are working on getting a response from the City's payroll in regards to the retroactive pay, he asked for the notes with suggestions on Policy IHAMB, and said that he hears the McCarthy staff and will follow up with FTA leadership in writing and in the upcoming union labor management meeting. He thanked all teachers and staff for their work, as this is the last meeting before the end of the school year, thanked the 50 retirees and spoke to the recent event that was held to congratulate and honor them.

*Mr. Freudberg joined the meeting remotely at 7:25 p.m. and in person at 7:37 p.m.

Letter of Engagement and Rate Change Proposal for Law Firm Morgan, Brown, and Joy's Human Resources and Collective Bargaining Work

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Inna London said that the District has been working with this firm since 2015 and rely on their guidance and expertise on labor relations. She said that the proposed rate change is still almost half of what their usual rate is for providing legal guidance, Attorney Connelly is the leading authority on working with the public sector and labor employee relations, and the increase is long overdue. Members spoke about all the great work and support Attorney Connelly has provided over the years, and asked if the 3% increase could be revisited every year as it seems like overall a large increase, and what the total effect on the budget will be based on past total legal costs for this firm. Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch said that legal services are hard to budget for, but they look at historical costs and factor in rising costs, and while they did not know about this proposed change while developing the budget they did increase legal services by \$10,000 for next year. He said that that should be a good budget for FY23 and then they will factor in the 3% increase in the future years.

Motion: To approve the letter of engagement change proposal for an increase in the rate for Morgan, Brown and Joy from the current \$225 per hour by \$35 per hour, bringing the blended rate for partners and associates to \$260 per hour and to approve billing rates increase by 3% annually, rounded up to the nearest \$5 increment starting on 7/1/23.

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

Discussion and Vote on the Unit T Framingham Education Support Staff MOA (if approved in Executive Session)

The Chair said that this was ratified by the FTA yesterday and approved by the School Committee in Executive Session earlier today. Ms. London said that she is proud to present the Unit T MOA for they years 2021-2024 and said that there was a lot accomplished including an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion work, professional development and training of staff, increased tuition reimbursement to further the work in the pipeline for BIPOC and multilingual staff to enter in the teaching workforce, increased complementation for staff in sub separate classrooms which will help recruit and retain staff, and a change in the parental language that provides greater benefit than required by state, among others. She said that 99% of the FTA voted in favor of ratification.

*Ms. Maskell recused herself at 7:39 p.m.

Motion: To approve the Unit T MOA as presented.

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

Discussion: Ms. Hugo asked for a breakdown of the vote. Ms. London said that 133 out of 134 that voted voted in favor of ratification, which is an unheard of percentage.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (7-0-0)

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

*Ms. Maskell returned to the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Update

FY22 Operating and Capital Budget

Mr. Lynch said that the FY22 YTD was in packets and it continues to show some departments in the negative, they are working with the City who is short staffed on the expense side and payroll side. He said that they are also working on the retroactive salary payments with the payroll department and trying to help with any support to get this done. He said that they will continue to monitor spending as they get to June 30th to close the year out and plan to open FY23 in the very new future, which means there will be two fiscal years open for payroll and expenditures.

FY23 Operating and Capital Budget

Mr. Lynch said that the City Council voted last Tuesday to approve the FY23 Operating Budget and the discussion and vote on the FY23 Capital Budget was moved to the next City Council meeting on June 21st. He said that he will send an update to the committee on what the results are.

Interviews with Applicants for the District 2 School Committee Vacancy

The Chair said that as per the agreed upon process each applicant has up to five minutes for an introduction, then will be asked the questions, and can end with up to two minutes with closing comments. Applicants will be interviewed in alphabetical order, and questions will be asked by members in District order with the Chair not participating in asking the questions. Each applicant was asked the following questions: What do you think the challenges are facing the school district? Provide an example of how your life or work experience could help a School Committee challenge. What are the biggest challenges in District 2? What are some solutions?, Based on what you bring to the table, can you say specifically how you can have the greatest impact during the next year and a half?, Our underlying theme for our multi-year strategic plan is equity. Within the purview of the School Committee, how would you address the issue of

equity within our district as a School Committee member?, How would you assess the level of local support for the school department budget. What will you do as a School Committee member to influence the budget?, What are your thoughts on adding a Southside School?, Comment on an area of strength or challenge you would like to address with the Superintendent, and What policy would you like to see amended and/or implemented? Ms. Moshe said that in order to be transparent she wanted to note that she spoke to the State Ethics Committee and filed a disclosure for Appearance of Conflict of Interest with the City Clerk and is able to participate and vote in this process.

The first applicant was David Gordon who introduced himself and said that he grew up and went through the school system in Framingham, found his calling as a financial steward in Boston Public Schools with a student centric philosophy, and has a daughter in Kindergarten at Stapleton who is also in the Explorers Program and son in preschool of which he is on the Board on to help with financial efforts. He said that in Framingham he has felt welcome and supported and the community has uniqueness and diversity.

He answered the questions asked including that some of the challenges facing the District are transportation and in his current job he works with the same transportation company which he could use to help leverage to bring any helpful avenues to the District. He said that he would ask the right questions, push back on what went wrong, and consider if we are being equitable. He said that other issues are with Capital Projects and security and he could use experiences in his career to provide benefits to the District and would work to coordinate with the appropriate affiliations, such as the City Council and Police Department. He said that he can make an impact as he is a big advocate for the MASBO program, which is a program for financial acuity, which has given him the ability to be an auxiliary proficient individual. He said that this has propelled him to be well rounded and to make sure the whole child is supported. He said that his strengths are that he has lived in a single parent home and under the poverty line which helps him be relatable and that along with his current work will help him to improve the District to be equitable and inclusive for all students. He said that he thinks it is important to discuss equity in a holistic way, not just about race, and he has been involved in a lot of professional development regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, and we need to think about equity across the board with curriculum, access to resources, sports, etc. He said that one of his strengths is working and being familiar with school budgets and being able to communicate it to constituents at various levels, including explaining to families how any changes will impact them in a way that they will understand, and gave an example of this from his work at Boston Public Schools. He said that he would be in support of a Southside school, as when you think about the breakdown of demographics and geography at the schools it is needed and it would provide an equitable opportunity for families to have a closer proximity to the schools which has an impact on students' ability to learn and grow. He said that he would like to identify any programs or support measures for our educators and school leaders related to wellness and mindfulness with the Superintendent, which would give the ability to continue morale boosting and for educators to feel that they have a seat at the table. He said that a policy that he would like to see implemented would be to have free lunches to continue past the upcoming year, and to look into any revolving accounts or access to grants that could help fund this. He spoke to his

and his family's own experience with Free and Reduced Lunch and spoke about how it would be beneficial for parents to not have to worry about this.

In closing he said that he appreciates the opportunity and the proficiencies that he has and the road that he has traveled both growing up and working in this industry has given him opportunities to get answers, explore avenues such as other ways to fund, experience with multiple school departments, and to be able to participate in professional development. He said that equity, inclusion, and communication is key to him, including making sure families with English as a second language understand what is happening with their students and the District.

The second applicant was Donald Taggart who introduced himself and said that he was excited to go through this process as he has been a School Committee member in the past, has lived in Framingham for almost 40 years and his last child just graduated from the schools, is a community representative on Barbieri Elementary School's school council, and has taught for almost 40 years. He said that his biggest strength is that he has done this and moving to 13 schools in 12 years as an Army brat helped shape who he is. He said that he is passionate about all kids, he wanted the diversity that Framingham offers for his own kids, and he wants to help make it better as everyone is going through a hard time.

He answered the questions asked including that one of the biggest challenges in the District is the continuing increase in population and the building situation, such as where are the increase in students going to go and the conditions the buildings are in. He spoke about his time on the Fuller School Building Committee since its inception. He said one thing that he could bring to the committee is his intense desire to see kids achieve at the best possible level, and he has tried to show this in his time before in the School Committee. He spoke about the importance of having administrative support staff and other support staff who make it easier for everything to run well and the need to make sure they know they are appreciated. He said that in terms of equity we have to show by example and encourage administrators and teachers to help students deal with issues, and listen and not judge. He said that we need to build an environment of caring and trust and not blame and negativity. He said that for the budget we need to be up front about how the changes are going to be made and going to impact students, teachers, and the schools in general. He said that the School Committee's job is to provide top quality education for students in our City and that takes money. He said that he is in favor of a Southside school and spoke to his previous experience on the School Committee and visiting the Bethany Road property that would be a perfect site for a school. He said that a school on the southside is badly needed with the north/south side concern which has been a problem for a long time. He said that he hired Dr. Tremblay when he was on the School Committee and how it was probably one of the best things he has ever been a part of. He said no matter what the Superintendent does, somebody will not like it, especially during a pandemic. He spoke to the Superintendent's strengths of always being visible, available, and having patience, tolerance, and perseverance. He said that we should make sure we are continuing mental health services as outlined in policies and how we should be promoting other initiatives such as the gardens at the high school.

In closing he said that he has the time to do this and it takes a lot of time to be a School Committee member and the committee needs to give time for staff to plan, collaborate and work together. He said that the School Committee handbook lists items to be an effective committee member and all of those items is what he plans on doing.

The third applicant was Brandon Ward who introduced himself and said that he was part of this process during the last vacancy and that he is here because he cares deeply about Framingham; the community, the kids, and the public school system that serves them. He spoke to how growing up he moved around a lot and felt like he really found a home when moving here and being able to take advantage of all the schools had to offer, such as extracurricular activities and AP classes, and is now on different boards throughout the City including being on the Keefe Tech School Committee for the past nine months. He said that a theme of his job is empowering others which he is committed to outside of his work as well, and he is driven by his values his mother taught him of self reliance and self resiliency, as well as being able to ask the tough questions and being collaborative and reflective.

He answered the questions asked including that one of the struggles the District is facing is that students are struggling to make up the ground that was lost during COVID-19, academically and social emotionally, and we need to provide support, resources, and prioritize that kind of learning. He said that another issue is ensuring an equitable school system, specifically a diverse teaching core and administrative office; attracting teachers and administrators that fill all those categories and retaining them. He spoke to physical infrastructure also being of importance and his time spent on the Keefe Tech School Committee where he learned about the MSBA process, which he hopes to get more involved in. He said that he thinks he will have the greatest impact through his skill set, commitment, and experiences. He has worked in government, on policy issues, and how to think critically and engage the community and other stakeholders in a collaborative process to make sure all voices are heard. He said that it is his desire to make sure this system works for everyone and is responsive and equitable. He said that equity should be focusing on inclusion and welcoming by creating a space where everyone feels at home. He said that there are a lot of different lenses that we should look at for equity, such as access in terms of physical space, access to appropriate technology, and taking a lead on eliminating those barriers and discrepancies. He said that ways that he could help to influence the budget are skill based; such as being analytical, detail oriented, an engaged member of the process, and his experience with it at Keefe Teach. He spoke to engaging stakeholders and the community with the budget goals and not just numbers, and working on problem solving ahead of time with the Mayor and City Council to get ahead of any potential problem areas. He said a Southside school is very necessary, especially within an equitable lens due to the amount of schools on the northside versus southside and the density of where students live. He spoke to the mindset that goes along with having a neighborhood school; being welcoming, more of a community place, parents being able to be more involved, and a shorter amount of transportation time. He said that the Superintendent has a lot of strengths including his time and commitment to being in schools and his communication style and transparency. He said that two areas that he would work on with the Superintendent would be where the communication channels are breaking down, such as with the public comment concerns brought up earlier, and Central Office turnover. He said that policies that should be

implemented would be in regards to the great work on language learning, the two way programs, bilingual work, etc and making sure they can expand and funding is available. He said that another possible policy would involve experiential learning and allowing students to engage and get involved in the community and learning by doing.

In closing he said that he cares deeply about this community and came back intentionally, as it has meant so much to him and given so much opportunity for him. He said that Framingham shows what a diversifying America can look like, and through this position he could help continue to improve upon that. He said that he would bring a fresh perspective, including the time he has spent in government and higher education, and his strong belief that education is one of the most important levers of change. He said that the skills he would bring would be invaluable to this role and community, with his mindset of being supportive, reflective, thoughtful, and committed.

Discussion on District 2 School Committee Vacancy

The Chair said that the vote will take place on June 21st in a Joint Meeting with the City Council and there can be a conversation now on the process. There was discussion regarding how the process will follow the same as last time, with today's meeting holding the interviews for the City Council to also review, and the majority of the combined votes is how a new member is elected. Mr. Freudberg said that there were good practices last year with coordination between the two Chair, but they could build upon it. He spoke to the rules document that was shared with all last year where each candidate got two minutes to introduce themselves and questions were not asked unless a City Council member had a question they needed before the vote, the Chairs allow it, and then all applicants answer the same question. He said that he can send around this document from the last time and asked that the video link of tonight's meeting be placed into the memo that was in the packets and will be sent to the City Council.

Vote on the School Committee Goals for 2022

The Chair said that all of the goals that were approved in the subcommittees were put into one document which is in the packet. Once the goals are approved Dr. Tremblay can help fill in the section in the document for the FPS Strategic Plan Reference for each goal and subcommittee Chairs should keep track of the progress on these goals in their meetings. Mr. Freudberg asked about the Building and Grounds goals including if it was intentional to have just one roof per year for replacement listed, as there could be opportunity for more than just one a year, and if the word potential should be included in regards to the reuse of the Farley Building, as there are reuse plans for when MassBay moves out. Ms. Barnhill said that she ran the last Building and Grounds Subcommittee where they voted on and approved these goals, along with the Building and Grounds Department, and the wording was intentional for both the roofs and potential reuse as they are still not sure how many personnel they will be moving into the Farley Building. Mr. Freudberg asked about the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability goal that mentions Meatless Mondays and asked what the purview of the School Committee may be on this and what actions that entails. Ms. Hugo, as the Chair of that subcommittee, said that they had the new Food Services Director come and address this, there was discussion on how there is a large carbon footprint with meat, but they also have to be cognizant of all different cultures and FDA requirements, so the compromise was to have the main selection on Mondays be

meatless but for there to remain other options as they can not be completely meatless due to funding and practicality.

Motion: To approve the School Committee goals.

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

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. LaBarge reported on the warrant totals with a total of \$3,119,248.32 and a payroll total of \$5,308,632.36 on the dates of May 30th and June 6th.

Mr. Freudberg, as the Chair of the Finance and Operations Subcommittee, said that the next meeting is scheduled for June 30th where they will work on the new goals just approved; including looking at the legal services aspect and the ARPA plan and financial aspects of that. He noted that if the District uses the City Solicitor the Mayor will be hiring it could save around \$20,000 which could help cover the expenses of the increase in legal service fees discussed earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Maskell, as the Policy Subcommittee Chair, said that they recently met and have four new policies up for first readings.

Motion: To approve Policies New Policy BEA: Hybrid Meetings and Remote Participation, ADC: Tobacco and/or Marijuana Use on School Premises, IHAMB: Teaching about Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco, and Policy EFD: Meal Charge Policy for first readings.

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

Discussion: Ms. Barnhill asked that Policy IHAMB be revisited in light of the public comment suggestions and Dr. Tremblay asking for follow up. Discussion on if it should be referred back to the Policy Subcommittee or approved for a first reading and then edited. The **motion was withdrawn.**

Motion: To approve Policies New Policy BEA: Hybrid Meetings and Remote Participation, ADC: Tobacco and/or Marijuana Use on School Premises, and Policy EFD: Meal Charge Policy for first readings and refer Policy IHAMB: Teaching about Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco back to the Policy Subcommittee.

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

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

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

Subcommittee Chairs gave updates including that the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee had a meeting with the new Food Services Director and the next meeting will not be until the start of the school year which will include administration discussing reduction of paper usage and other items they can address immediately on the new policy, the Health and Wellness Subcommittee will not meet until August to let the new Director of Health and Wellness get settled and they should hear by the end of June if the District is selected as one of the Districts the John Stocker Institute will work with, and discussion of how both the Town Wide PTO and individual school PTOs are in need of family involvement and getting the word out for involvement including through the Media and Communications Department.

Approval of Minutes and Gifts

Motion: To approve the \$500 donation from the Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance Program to support Framingham High School (FHS) in the areas of Math and/or Science.

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

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of May 4, 2022 and the Executive Session minutes of February 16, 2022, March 16, 2022, and April 6, 2022 as approved in Executive Session.

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

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Ms. Ottaviani **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)
(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)
Meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Memo from FPS Regarding Rate Change Proposal for Law Firm Morgan, Brown, and Joy

Memo from Law Firm Morgan, Brown, and Joy

Questions for District 2 Applicants

District 2 Applications

FY22 YTD

Draft 2022 School Committee Goals

Warrants

Policy Summary and Proposed Policy Edits

Draft May 4, 2022 Minutes

Draft February 16, 2022, March 16, 2022, and April 6, 2022 Executive Session Minutes

These minutes were approved in Open Session by the Framingham School Committee on July 27, 2022.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on July 28, 2022.