



SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Priscila Sousa, Chair • Jessica Barnhill, Vice Chair • Valerie Ottaviani, Clerk
Adam Freudberg • David Gordon • Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge • Tiffanie Maskell • Jennifer Moshe
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: September 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Memorial Building - Blumer Room
150 Concord Street, Framingham
MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Priscila Sousa
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill*
Adam Freudberg
David Gordon*
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Jennifer Moshe
Valerie Ottaviani
Priscila Sousa
ABSENT: Tiffanie Maskell
ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Nilufar Noorian, Student Advisory Committee Chair
Joanna Hastry, Executive Assistant for the School Committee

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m., announced those in attendance, and noted that Student Advisory Committee Chair Nilufar Noorian and Mayor Sisitsky were joining remotely, School Committee member Tiffanie Maskell would not be in attendance due to an illness and member David Gordon would be joining in progress due to a conflicting meeting. She said that the meeting is being broadcast live on the Government Channel, can be viewed live on the Framingham Public Schools Facebook Page, and noted information on how to participate in public comment in person and 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

There were no participants for public comment.

Announcements from the Chair

There were no announcements from the Chair.

Mayor's Update

Mayor Sisitsky said that they sent the letter to the NRT Bus that they are in violation of the contract and are put on notice that the City reserves rights to take any action deemed necessary to bring them into compliance. He said that they have not heard a response yet, but he will keep the Committee updated.

Remarks from the Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

SAC Chair Nilufar Noorian gave updates including that last week each grade had an assembly for expectations and graduation requirements, tomorrow is a no homework day, Friday students will report to homeroom to take an I-decide survey and receive new IDs with the photos that were taken at picture day last week, on Friday sophomores will have a presentation from two authors, next Tuesday late busses begin which will help with clubs, and yesterday the SAC had their first meeting with their new advisor, Mr. Pave.

Superintendent's Update

Bus Behavior Follow Up

Dr. Tremblay said that there was a memo in the packets and gave an update on bus behaviors. This included that families have received a notification that emphasized the need to be partners in regards to behaviors on the buses, that he will also receive the conduct reports, bus riding privileges will be revoked if it is necessary to do so due to safety, drivers will be given training tips on how to address behaviors, and they will be tracking the behavior data through SWIS (Student Warning Indicator System). He spoke of how there is still a shortage of drivers and hopes showing the District is taking the behaviors seriously will help retain and recruit drivers. Ms. Moshe requested that the School Committee receive communications more than 15 minutes before the public. Dr. Tremblay said that he can change the timing of the communications.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Update

Dr. Tremblay said that he is covering this update for the Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch who cannot attend due to an illness. He said that they continue to work with the City to close out FY22 and hope to have it completed in the next couple of weeks. He said that they are starting to build the FY24 budget and have made it part of the residency visits, including looking at staff rosters and any positions that are currently unfilled and if they need to be carried forward or if any efficiencies can be made.

Discussion on Possible Program for Referral Bonuses for FPS Staff who Refer New Bus Driver Hires

*Ms. Barnhill recused herself at 7:32 p.m.

Dr. Tremblay said that this was referred by a member for discussion to look at a possible incentive for referral bonuses for current FPS staff who refer new bus drivers and how it may impact negotiations. He said that his recommendation is to also consider referral bonuses for

all staff vacancies and not just bus drivers. Mr. Freudberg said that he hopes there is a sense of urgency on this so the administration can work with the unions to encourage current staff to help fill vacancies. He said from a budget standpoint we are saving \$1,000 dollars a day due to NRT unfortunately being down drivers, and suggested that savings could go towards the referral process that is determined by the District. Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Inna London said, in response to a question from Ms. Moshe, that the matter of compensation does need to be bargained with unions and it would begin by sending out a proposal and offering times to meet with the unions. She noted that there are about 80 or so open positions and they hope this will help with the recruitment process. Members spoke in support of this incentive, including how unprecedented issues need creative solutions. Dr. Tremblay said that he has already reached out to the FTA to let them know this may be coming and they were open to the conversation and looking at how other districts have done similar things. Mr. Freudberg said that he does not think the committee needs to set the bonus rates, but hopes that in this hiring market whatever is chosen is meaningful and impactful.

Motion: For the School Committee to request and authorize the Superintendent and staff to create a hiring incentive program as described.

Moved: Mr. Freudberg **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge

Discussion: Ms. Hugo asked if this will be available to bus drivers as well even if they are not FPS employees. Discussion about how NRT has said in the past that they have something like this already in place and if not conversations can be had with them about providing something similar.

Vote: Unanimous (6-0-0)

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

The Chair said that the Building and Grounds Subcommittee Chair Mr. Gordon is en route and asked if members would entertain a five minute recess for him to be able to be present for the Capital Budget presentation. All in agreement.

The Chair declared a recess at 7:44 p.m. The Chair called the meeting back to order at 7:49 p.m.

*Ms. Barnhill rejoined the meeting in person and Mr. Gordon joined the meeting remotely at 7:49 p.m.

FY24 Capital Budget Presentation and Vote to Submit FPS Request to Mayor

Director of Building and Grounds Matt Torti and Assistant Director of Building and Grounds Thomas Begin shared a FY24 Capital Budget presentation that included information on the request that included roof repairs/replacement at McCarthy and Dunning Elementary Schools, additional funding for a Feasibility Study for Hemenway Elementary School, King Elementary School front entrance replacement, roof repairs/replacement design for Potter Road and Brophy Elementary Schools, exterior envelope design at King and Framingham High School, fire alarm system replacement at Cameron Middle School, paving and stormwater improvements at Walsh Middle School and McCarthy Elementary School, ADA compliance upgrades districtwide, asbestos abatement districtwide, security upgrades districtwide, and Farley building generator installation. The total amount of the requests is \$13,120,000.

Members asked if looking into solar while replacing roofs could be a possible savings and why we are paying for roof repairs if there are extended warranties. Mr. Torti said that they have looked into the option of solar when replacing roofs and found that solar companies are only offering repair to the roofs and not replacement, and our roofs need to be replaced. He said that the roofs are coming off extended warranty and the requests are for the design, which is 10% of the roof replacement cost, and not replacement. Members asked if there are any wiring issues for the fire alarm systems, about the lifeline of the technology and infrastructure updates, and if there are training updates for staff for any new systems. Mr. Torti said that the wiring is intact from what they are being told and they are recommending the wiring stays in place and just replace the devices as rewiring would double the cost of the project. He said that in general any electrical system for any building has a life expectancy of about 20 years and they have a long range plan for replacing systems as they age, but that was put on hold due to the dire need of roof replacements and addressing emergency issues. He said that technology can change year to year and they find that the more technical the new systems are the more complex they are and the more things can go wrong. He said that for old systems the problem is not always being able to purchase parts to repair those systems. He said that they have a full time electrification on staff who will coordinate with the fire alarm company whose contract includes a set hourly rate for any service calls that are needed.

Mr. Torti spoke to the process of the Capital Budget submission that includes review by the CFO who then submits their proposal to the Mayor and City Council, and how the School District generally does not receive the total amount requested. He said that if the School Committee agrees with the projects in the priority order that was presented they will then support any projects up to the dollar amount that is approved by the City. He noted that the backup materials that show the 90 plus projects over the next few years do not include inflation, but it is to give a general idea of the capital project needs. Mr. Gordon asked for a summary of a discussion that occurred in the Building and Grounds Subcommittee meeting regarding how the 30% threshold of assessed buildings can lead to triggering costs of ADA compliance. Mr. Torti said that if we invest funding into any existing building and it exceeds 30% of the assessed value of that building it triggers code compliance for fire systems, ADA compliance, and life safety systems which would then need to be replaced. He said that in the past they requested that the City reassess our buildings due to this. Mr. Freudberg spoke to how different revenue streams were used for projects, such as \$5 million for air ventilation upgrades, and asked if the project manager has been hired to help with the workload and implementation of the many projects. Mr. Torti said that the Capital Projects Coordinator left about five months ago and they are moving forward working with school administration to use funds that were saved from not being able to use summer help during the pandemic to hire a Senior Project Manager. Mr. Freudberg suggested that as they approach the next phase of the Capital Budget approval it is important to have a strong partnership with the CFO and Mayor, encouraged them to get data on the cost to bond each project, including what it would cost to defer a year or two, and to come back to the committee if there is ever an off cycle request that helps a critical problem, such as parking at the high school or additional athletic programs.

Motion: To support the FY24 Capital Budget Proposal as presented and submitted and to submit the request to the Mayor.

Moved: Ms. Barnhill

Seconded: Ms. Ottaviani

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

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

Discussion on Communications with Governmental Authorities and the Community and Referral of Policy KLK: Relations with Governmental Authorities to the Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Sousa said that this agenda item was a request from a member in light of events at the beginning of the school year and for a clarification of our role in communication with other governmental agencies. Ms. Moshe said that this conversation is more than just one policy, it works in conjunction with many policies and with working with community and governmental agencies, and suggested the committee create a task force to work with City officials and administration. She said that traffic is such a big concern, including some changes that were made at Brophy and the high school, and it requires collaboration. She said that the policies are not the problem, the policies not being followed is the problem. Mr. Freudberg said that in general whenever a school is looking at a traffic pattern, engaging with the community is part of a stakeholder engagement plan and making sure it happens consistently is a goal here. He said that creating a task force is within the School Committee's purview under Policy BDF. Dr. Tremblay said that he supports the idea of the impacts on the policy, but wonders if this will be a standing taskforce for a certain amount of time and what items or projects go to that taskforce for review. Mayor Sisitsky said that the City will cooperate as much as they can with a task force if one is established so there is better communication.

Motion: To refer this to the Policy Subcommittee for discussion of the entire matter.

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

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg said he would recommend continuing the conversation on the advisory committee and said that it would not be a standing subcommittee, it would be a short term task force with a specific scope and end date. Dr. Tremblay said that the task force wouldn't know what future things would require collaboration across divisions and asked what happens if something comes up and the taskforce has already ended. He said that he wonders if a MOU would be more effective rather than a task force. Ms. Moshe said that she would suggest a 15 month current review of all traffic patterns, the problems with pickups and drop off times due to less buses, and that it is a problem of policies not being followed and a need for solutions. Ms. Sousa said that she has concerns that unless it was done very carefully the task force could be veering into micromanaging day to day operations and things not in the committee's purview. Ms. Ottaviani suggested having someone from the police force and DPW involved for traffic issues and projects, but noted that by the time the task force is put together the issues discussed may be solved. Discussion and agreement on adding a proposal for the task force to the next agenda and the Chair and Ms. Moshe working on a proposal. Mr. Freudberg said that there has been a lot of focus on traffic, but he suggests that that is only one aspect of the task force, and should look at what the end deliverable would be, such as to support the Superintendent in cross department collaboration in a different way, such as with a MOU, or to support the Superintendent with policies being implemented. Ms. Hugo suggested including the Superintendent in conversations of the proposal to make sure lines of demarcation are clear.

Roll Call Vote: 7-1-0 (Yes: Hugo, Gordon, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge. No: Moshe)

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. LaBarge reported on the warrant totals with a total of \$1,890,866.60 and a payroll total of \$5,234,608.80 on the dates of September 5, 2022 and September 12, 2022.

Mr. Freudberg, as the Chair of the Finance and Operations Subcommittee, said that they are looking to meet before the October 19th full School Committee meeting to discuss transportation reporting, student activities audit, and updates and recommendations on legal services.

The Chair said that there is a vote to add the Student Resource Officer MOU as a Cross Reference to Policy KLG.

Motion: To add the Student Resource Officer MOU as a Cross Reference to Policy KLG: Relations with Police and Fire Authorities and waive the second reading.

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

Ms. Moshe, as the Chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee, said that there will be a meeting on 29th to discuss the School Committee goal of possible equity training for the Committee.

Ms. Hugo, as the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee, said that there will be a meeting possibly on October 18th, pending staff availability, and will include an update on paper consumption and solar canopies.

Approval of Minutes and Gifts

The Chair said that a member submitted edits to the minutes that were sent out earlier today for members' review.

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of August 3, 2022 with proposed edits.

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

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg thanked the Executive Assistant and Clerk for making the edits and the Finance Department for validating that the amounts listed were correct.

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (8-0-0) (Yes: Hugo, Gordon, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Bus Behavior Memo

FY22 YTD

FY23 YTD

FY24 Capital Budget Presentation
Draft FY24 Capital Budget and Backup Materials
Policy KLK: Relations with Governmental Authorities
Warrants
Draft Policy KLG: Relations with Police and Fire Authorities
Draft August 3, 2022 Minutes

These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee in Open Session on November 16, 2022.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on November 17, 2022.