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

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: October 19, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Remote
MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Priscila Sousa
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Adam Freudberg
David Gordon
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Valerie Ottaviani
Priscila Sousa
ABSENT: Jennifer Moshe
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 7:03 p.m., noted all in attendance, and said that Student Advisory Chair Nilufar Noorian was joining remotely, School Committee member Jennifer Moshe would not be in attendance due to a family engagement, and Mayor Sisitsky will not be in attendance due to a conflicting appointment. She 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. She 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

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Christine Mulrone spoke to Ballot Question #1 on the Fair Share Amendment and said that it would create a 4% tax on a portion of a person's annual income over \$1 million and dedicate the funds raised to transportation and public education. She said that 99% of us won't have to pay a penny more and will have \$2 billion in funding to improve our public schools and colleges, repair roads, and invest in public transportation. She then spoke about staff who are leaving Framingham, including some leaving for teaching positions in other communities. She asked the District to research why staff are leaving and if there is a Framingham specific issue that arises to address it. She said that without question there is a shortage of staff everywhere and the District needs to do everything they can to retain the quality staff they have while also working to fill the open positions with high quality candidates.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair noted that the School Committee met earlier tonight in Executive Session 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 declared, specifically in regards to a claim for personal injuries caused by the negligent and/or wrongful acts or omissions of the agendas, servants, employees, or officers of Framingham High School, Executive Session Minutes review updates to previously made redactions to move forward for Open Session approvals, pursuant to MGL, the committee is in the process of periodically reviewing previously redacted minutes: September 5, 2018, April 24, 2019, December 18, 2019, February 12, 2020, April 27, 2020, August 4, 2020, October 21, 2020, January 28, 2021, March 31, 2021, November 17, 2021, August 21, 2020, 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 June 15, 2022 and June 29, 2022.

She said that with the FY24 budget cycle starting she is asking that members plan conversations with constituents and begin discussions of budget requests for FY24 in order to start a list of questions and requests to discuss at the next meeting. She asked that all requests be sent to the Executive Assistant by November 9th.

Mayor's Update

There was no report as the Mayor was not in attendance due to a conflicting meeting.

Remarks from the Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

SAC Chair Nilufar Noorian said that the FHS Drama Company is putting on a production of Sleepy Hollow and congratulated everyone in the FHS Marching Band for winning first place in last week's competition. She said that if students have not received their new student IDs they can go to their house offices and they will be provided. She said that she attended and presented at the Massachusetts Association of Student Representatives meeting last week as the Interim Director of Finance and represented Framingham in debate sessions and review of resolutions.

The Chair asked to take the agenda out of order until all students for the FHS Gender and Sexuality Alliance presentation were present.

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Superintendent's Update

Dr. Tremblay spoke to public comment from earlier in the meeting and said that retention is an important conversation to have and asked for it to be a labor management topic to be discussed further. He said that they have tried to incentivize staff to the extent they can, such as with the recent bonuses for COVID-19 and referrals, and benefits such as yoga. He said that they do offer exit interviews to find out why staff are leaving, but do not always get engagement from staff.

He spoke of his school based residency and said that he is at the sixth school on it; Barbieri Elementary School after being at Dunning Elementary School. He said that he is continuing to read to the Class of 2030 every year, is hoping to follow them throughout his time as a Superintendent, and started this in 2017. Ms. Maskell shared her experience on visiting Dr. Tremblay on his residency, including how great it is that students know who he is. Dr. Tremblay spoke about all the different things he does during his residency at the schools while still balancing out the day to day issues that come up.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Update

FY22 Closeout

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch said that FY22 has finally been closed out with the City Accountant and CFO. He said that during the closeout a shift was made from the Operating Budget to the Circuit Breaker as planned and it exceeded the amount that was budgeted to balance the budget for FY23. He said that \$2.5 million of the Circuit Breaker Carry Over was budgeted to offset the FY23 budget and \$1.9 million will be carried over to cover any unforeseen special education out of district costs. He said that this was only slightly higher than the \$1.8 million that they had expected, and one reason is that there were some items and materials ordered that did not show up before June 30th and they had to close some grants.

FY23 Operating and Capital Budget

Mr. Lynch said that the FY23 YTD was in the packet and shows 26.66% encumbered and spent. He said that for capital projects they are working on purchasing furniture, they finished the Barbieri cafeteria project, and are moving into roof repair design.

Mr. Lynch said that they are in full swing in creating the FY24 draft budget and he has spoken to the Chair about having School Committee members submit any requests for the budget by November 9th, which is good timing as the following Monday budget sheets are due from all Principals and departments. The Chair said this gives members a chance to reach out to the community, discuss requests all together at the next meeting, and vote on a list to send to Mr. Lynch. She said requests can still be sent out after that, but this is a way to organize and collaborate and send a list all together. Ms. Hugo asked how to explain to constituents what they can ask for. Ms. Sousa said they could keep it open as to how to communicate to constituents and lisations and she could offer advice, but doesn't want to impose or instruct members on how to reach out. Mr. Freudberg gave an example of a request that he brought up at the Finance Subcommittee of having health education start earlier than 5th grade, as has been discussed in past meetings. He said that sending requests now would be in order to not

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spring it on the District when it's too late, and noted that the District is in the "wish list" portion of the budget process, so members could also look at this as their "wish list", knowing that not all requests are possible.

Transportation Update

Mr. Lynch said that NRT will be at the meeting in November, asked that any data that members are looking for that's missing from their updates to let him know, and noted that some data is missing currently as routes are still being figured out and students added. He said that they have had issues with athletics transportation as NRT has been able to do the return rides back, but they have not had drivers in the afternoon to bring them, so the District has reached out to other companies as shown in the report and have been using the Flyer vans.

Ms. Maskell asked how many trips the 15 passenger Flyer vans have been able to accommodate and asked about the doubled up runs, including how there are less this year than last year, but with less drivers, and if the same students are being impacted as last year. Mr. Lynch said that two of the doubled up runs are the same as last year, and they are providing doubled up runs to be able to give more students transportation even if they are ineligible. He said that the Interim Director of Transportation was able to shift routes and analyze where students live in order to reduce the number of doubled up runs even with fewer drivers. He noted that student populations shift so one cannot expect the same number of doubled up runs each year. Ms. Maskell expressed her concern and disappointment that the same students are late to school again this year and requested that the District look at this so the same students are not affected. Dr. Tremblay said that they are trying to get as many students to school as possible and due to the shortage of buses they may be late. He said that the other option would be to not do double up runs and not provide transportation for ineligible students, which would provide less students with transportation. Ms. Ottaviaini asked if the District were to not provide rides to ineligible students would there be enough buses and would they all be on time. Mr. Lynch said that he can look into this and report back at the next meeting. He said that they transport over 2,000 ineligible students and the problem is there isn't enough buses so they are fuller, make more stops, and get to schools later. Mr. Freudberg, as the Chair of the Finance and Operations Subcommittee, said at their last meeting they reviewed the structure of the reports from NRT and the District and feedback included wanting data to be actionable and to have better explanations for what it means when they have drivers in the pipeline, as it leads to the expectations of soon having more drivers. He said that Article 11 of the contract with NRT allows hiring a sub-vendor with the City's approval and asked if more coach buses, that are being used for athletic transportation, could be used for the am/pm yellow bus runs and said that NRT should be doing more with the options they have under that article. He asked about the written report from NRT with their detailed plan that was requested in the Mayor and City Solicitor's letter. Mr. Lynch said that he will reach out the vendors they are using for athletic transportation to see if they would be an option for school transportation and said that he has been in contact with NRT to prepare them for the November meeting.

Vote on the District's Proposal to Hire a Title IX Attorney Nuttal, MacAvoy, & Joyce P.C., to add the New City Solicitor for School Committee and School District Representation, and to Retain Petrini & Associates for Outstanding Matters

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Finance and Operations Subcommittee Chair Mr. Freudberg said that the subcommittee, as part of the School Committee's goals, had completed the three year review of attorneys earlier in the year as required by policy and more recently reviewed the financial aspects of hiring attorneys now that the Mayor hired a new City Solicitor. He said that the Superintendent, Mayor, and Mr. Lynch worked collaboratively on the proposal in the packet, noted that there would be a cost savings using the City Solicitor and a vote to use them is essential for the Superintendent to start certain conversations, such as with the Bethany Project, the engagement letter for Petrini and Associates needs to be adjusted to just being used for any lingering matters, such as the situation with the former bus company, and the District is focusing a lot on Title IX reforms which is why they are proposing a new attorney that is authorized for Title IX topics. He said that the recommendations were unanimously supported in the subcommittee meeting.

Motion: To approve adding Mr. Joyce's firm as the Title IX attorney, adding the City Solicitor to represent the District and the Committee, and changing Petrini and Associates' scope to the ongoing lingering matters.

Moved: Mr. Freudberg

Seconded: Ms. Ottaviani

Discussion: Ms. Hugo asked if something should be added to give leeway to hire an attorney that is more School Committee related or specifically trained in school law. Mr. Freudberg said that under policy the School Committee has the oversight and authority to vote at any time if a new attorney is to be engaged with and it could be added as an agenda item if that arises.

Vote: Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Vote to Establish a New School Building Committee for an Early Childhood Education Center

Vice Chair Jessica Barnhill said that we have been talking about the inequities in our elementary school offerings for years, how Hemenway Elementary School is next on the list as needing a major renovation, and in multiple votes in 2020-2022 the Framingham City Council and School Committee have taken steps to expand early childhood education, as well as make the pursuit of a new school south of Route 9 a top priority. She spoke to the steps already taken, such as voting to enter into the MSBA process and to request and authorize the Mayor to negotiate the purchase of land on Bethany Road to support the new school site, among others, and said that the next step is the creation of a School Building Committee.

She said that a draft letter to the Mayor requesting the new committee is in the packets and there can be a few items discussed, such as if members want any changes to how the document reads, the makeup of the committee (for positions that are not automatic) such as PTO members as non-voting members, and if it should be listed as current School Committee members as it's a multi-year projects and members will change. She said that the decision of which three members are part of the committee does not need to be decided tonight. She said that the next steps, if this vote is approved, is included in the packet and includes requesting action from the Mayor who then would issue an Executive Order to create the School Building Committee, and it would come back to the School Committee for a future vote. She thanked Mr. Freudberg who worked to arrange and structure this information.

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Motion: To request that the Mayor create the new School Building Committee for a PreK-5 Early Childhood Education Center.

Moved: Ms. Barnhill

Seconded: Mr. Freudberg

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg said that the Mayor and CFO reviewed the document in the packets in a past meeting and the only change to the document since then is making it only current School Committee members eligible based on feedback from prior conversations. He said that he likes the idea of having PTO members have two seats, which is a gap in the current School Building Committee, and spoke to the importance of having a City Council liaison and the Mayor go through the required City Charter process to collaborate with the City Council to advertise and make appointments from across the City. Discussion about how if the spots for PTO members is not filled the committee would still happen as it is a non-voting seat, how it lists “or designee” so if the member cannot attend they can send someone or they could split the workload, how it does not have to be a PTO Board Member so there are a lot of people to pull from, and how it was written to be broad for any current PreK-5th grade PTO member, but it can be determined if a Hemenway Elementary School PTO members is wanted during the application period.

Vote: Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

LGBTQIA+ History Month and Presentation from the FHS Gender and Sexuality Alliance

Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Advisor Katherine Quinn introduced GSA members Sage Wolff and Reese Davies who shared a presentation on Queer History Month including why it’s in October, information on the March for Gay rights in 1979, background information, National Coming Out Day, why we celebrate, what the difference is between Pride Month and Queer History Month, overall Queer History, and sources. They noted that queer has been used as a derogatory term and they are using it in a reclaimed sense to mean anyone who is non straight. They shared some concerns they have heard from students at FHS that focused on the gender neutral bathroom policies and also representation at the school. They said many ethnic minorities in the club and at FHS do not feel represented at the high school because of the majority white staff at the school. They said the main concern with the gender neutral bathrooms is that in order to use them students have to ask for a very specific hall pass which could lead to the risk of outing a student to a teacher before the student is ready to do so solely because they need to use the bathroom. They noted that special passes are not needed for the other bathrooms and should not be needed for the gender neutral ones.

Members thanked the students for presenting and spoke in support of the work they are doing, how there may be good intentions on the part of the committee and administration, such as the bathrooms, and the importance of feedback to make sure the changes are helpful or if they need to be changed, and asked for follow up on the bathroom issue as well as an issue brought up about middle school bathrooms that was discussed at the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee with the Director of Health and Wellness, as well as if there needs to be a written policy or better understanding with consistent effort for bathroom access.

Subcommittee Reports

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Mr. LaBarge said that the warrants were signed for a total of \$2,121,802.19 and a payroll total of \$5,261,858.30 on the dates of October 3rd and October 7th, 2022.

Mr. Freudberg, as the Chair of the Finance and Operations Subcommittee, said that at their meeting they discussed, along with the topics mentioned earlier in the meeting, that the Annual Student Activity Audit process has started with first the process of selecting a vendor and will be discussed again in the future. He noted that the District completes an external audit every year even though it is only required every three.

Mr. Freudberg said that at the Fuller School Building Committee they discussed how the last meeting ever is on November 21st with the caveat that there may be a few financial matters that need to transition to the District. He said that there was a discussion on if the subcommittee needs to continue for invoices that are a few months away and to determine if the \$1.4 million line item that has not yet been spent needs to be spent before the subcommittee ends, such as moving it to the Building and Grounds Revolving Account or bond avoidance, or other creative ways.

Ms. Maskell, as the Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, said that they met on October 13th and approved all the policy changes outlined in the packet.

Motion: To remove regulations from the policy manual and replace with links to the corresponding policies.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Ms. Sousa

Discussion: Mr. Freudberg said that he is comfortable with this as long as it is well timed to make sure that when MASC removes the current regulations the hyperlink is added. He said that the Superintendent should think about when to alert the School Committee of changes to regulations, as they can be changed at any time by him and the committee does not have to be told except when it raises to the level of something new and transformational per policy.

Vote: Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Ms. Maskell noted that the new policy on guidelines for booster organizations will go to the Gender Equity Working Group for review before coming back to the School Committee for a second reading in case they have any suggestions.

Motion: To approve the New Policy: Guidelines for Booster Organizations and Outside Entities Supporting FHS Athletics for a first reading.

Moved: Ms. Sousa **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill **Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Motion: To approve policies KDB: Public's Right to Know, KDCA: Use of Students in Public Information Program, KDD: News Media Relations/News Releases, and KE: Public Complaints/Public Feedback for first readings.

Moved: Ms. Barnhill **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

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Ms. Hugo, as the Chair of the Climate, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee, said that at their last meeting they had an unanimous vote to refer a charging station policy to the Policy Subcommittee. She noted that a draft has already been put together by Dr. Tremblay and his team.

Motion: To refer a new policy on charging stations to the Policy Subcommittee.

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

Discussion: MR. Freudberg said that this was already referred on November 10, 2021 and suggested prioritizing this as there are already charging stations open for use and the District could work with City Sustainability Coordinator on building more.

Vote: Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Ms. Hugo said that the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee met yesterday and discussed topics including the solar projects at Farley, reduced paper consumption, and coordinated with Sustainability Framingham to support yes on Question One which would produce \$2 billion annually for the commonwealth for transportation and education, as well as support many initiatives of this subcommittee and others in the school district. She said that the next meeting is on December 13th at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes and Gifts

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of September 7, 2022.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Motion: To approve the Executive Session Minutes of June 15, 2022 and June 28, 2022 as approved in Executive Session.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill **Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Motion: To approve the redactions on previously approved Executive Session Minutes of September 5, 2018, April 24, 2019, December 18, 2019, February 12, 2020, April 27, 2020, August 4, 2020, October 21, 2020, January 28, 2021, March 31, 2021, November 17, 2021, August 21, 2020 as approved in Executive Session.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Ms. Ottaviani **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Vote:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Presentation from FHS Gender Sexuality Alliance

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FY22 Closeout Memo

FY23 YTD

FPS Transportation Update

FPS Legal Services Update

Petrini and Associates Letter of Engagement

Nuttall, Macavoy, and Joyce Letter of Engagement

School Building Committee Memo

Warrants

Policy Summary

Draft New Policy: Guidelines for Booster Organizations and Outside Entities Supporting FHS Athletics

Draft Section K Policies with Edits

Draft September 7, 2022 Minutes

Executive Session Minutes of September 5, 2018, April 24, 2019, December 18, 2019, February 12, 2020, April 27, 2020, August 4, 2020, October 21, 2020, January 28, 2021, March 31, 2021, November 17, 2021, August 21, 2020 with Updated Redactions

Draft Executive Session Minutes of June 15, 2022 and June 28, 2022