



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: February 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Memorial Building - Blumer Room
 150 Concord Street, Framingham
 Remote Option via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Priscila Sousa
PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
 Adam Freudberg
 Beverly Hugo
 William LaBarge
 Tiffanie Maskell*
 Jennifer Moshe
 Valerie Ottaviani
 Priscila Sousa
 Mayor Charlie Sisitsky
ABSENT: David Gordon
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 7:00 p.m., noted all in attendance, and said that Mayor Sisitsky was joining remotely and School Committee member David Gordon would be joining remotely in progress. 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

Jeff Weinstein said that he is a fifth grade teacher at Potter Road Elementary School on the English side of the Dual Language Program and would like to address concerns that himself and peers have regarding the proposed change in school calendar, specifically moving from early release days to delayed opening days. He said that they have seen a massive uptick in absences due to students missing the bus, often due to being responsible for getting themselves on the bus due to caregivers working. He said that out of his 50 students 15 have missed more than two weeks of school due to missing the buses. He said that if we now switch to a delayed opening and students not having to get to elementary school until almost noon they will be left alone even longer at home and even more likely to miss the bus. He said another concern is that many students rely on the breakfasts at school and they would not be getting this on a delayed opening day.

Announcements from the Chair

The Chair noted that the School Committee met earlier tonight in Executive Session to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of a real property if the Chair declares that an Open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(6), specifically in regards to Mass Bay Community College's lease of the Farley Building located at 19 Flagg Drive 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 October 3, 2022 and October 19, 2022.

Mayor's Update

Mayor Sisitsky said that they are aware of the problem with the capital project for the Farley roof's bid coming in substantially higher than the budgeted amount and they are working on this. He said that he urges the committee and District not to make any rash decisions about the rest of the proposed capital projects, as they are not sure where they are going to end up with revenue projections or free cash, and it is premature to make any decisions about cutting the budget. He said that instead of suggesting any cuts he would advise the District and committee to prioritize the projects so if he has to cut anything he will know what the committee and District's top priorities are.

The Chair asked to take the agenda out of order to discuss capital projects now, there were no objections. Mr. Freudberg thanked the Mayor for his helpful guidance to not consider cutting projects at this time and said that the earlier vote on the capital projects was in priority order and the Mayor concurred with them except the one Farley alarm project which was already discussed. He suggested separating the vote on the additional construction costs for the Farley roof project and new King exterior envelope project as they are FY23 off cycle projects and to not take any action on the FY24 projects at this time. He said that he is concerned that if the two parking lot projects are deferred the solar studies would also be deferred as they are the next two solar projects for canopies in the District. Ms. Hugo noted that solar canopies are one of the priorities of the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee.

Remarks from the Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

SAC Chair Nilufar Noorian said that they continue to work on a new survey in regards to the high school start time and asking if students would like to have a later start time or not. She said

that they have been discussing and receiving guidance from the Superintendent on what kind of data is needed and they will be sending out the survey to students shortly. She said they will then send a survey intended for staff and teachers and possibly even to parents and caregivers to see their perspectives on this issue.

Superintendent's Update

Presentation and First Reading of the 2023-2024 School Year Calendar

Dr. Tremblay said that there are some updates to the draft 2023-2024 school year calendar including pulling back on the late start concept. He said that the intention was an idea from another district in order to have a punctual start time and end time for professional development and to have a fresh start for staff. He said that they are pulling back on this now due to the impact for families, such as if buses are running late on a late start date students and families may just say why bother coming at all. He said that if all buses were running and on time it would hopefully be a different conversation. He spoke to the other notes in the memo about the calendar including Pre-K and Kindergarten Professional Development day to happen on September 5th, aligning the first day of school for kindergarten students with BLOCKS Preschool students, kindergarten screening to happen prior to the first day of school, a Staff Appreciation Day as a no school day on November 22, 2023, delayed starts at the high school for MCAS/ACCESS testing, early release collaboration days at the high school, and a supplemental calendar for other religious and cultural holidays.

Ms. Maskell spoke in support of the move of kindergarten evaluations as they are essential and can take a long time. Ms. Moshe said that future planning will need to happen to keep the Staff Appreciation Day as there are more no school days for holidays that will be on the weekday in the future and expressed concern on having two different pages for a calendar in order to see why there is a day off. Dr. Tremblay said that they will be looking ahead and it may include some negotiation considerations to continue to have the Staff Appreciation Day in the future. He spoke of the balance that is needed in creating the calendar and trying to be inclusive, while also not having additional days of school in the summer. Ms. Sousa said that the City Clerk asked for consideration of having Super Tuesday on March 5th as a no school day due to voting happening in the schools. Dr. Tremblay said that he will take that under advisement, that he surveyed the Principals affected by this and they said it would not be a problem, and they are trying to have a predictable pattern of Mondays and Thursdays for early releases or professional development days. Members spoke about concerns with voters in the building when students are and the possibility of having a joint recommendation from the City Clerk and Superintendent for all the different voting days and not just Super Tuesday. Ms. Moshe suggested also moving the Professional Development Day on April 11th to the 12th as it is then a week of April vacation.

Dr. Tremblay said that they are now planning on keeping Friday, June 2nd as the graduation day and look into moving it to an earlier start time. He spoke to the issues in scheduling this in the past on Sundays due to the heat and on Fridays due to religious holidays starting at sunset. He said that this does not need to be voted on as it is not listed on this version of the calendar, but will be added in the next one. Ms. Barnhill said that some constituents had questions regarding transportation to Kindergarten screening since it will no longer be on school days. Dr. Tremblay

said that they have a contract with Tommy's Taxi and can work with families to provide transportation through them. Mr. Freudberg said that in the past few years the committee has worked to try and get the final version of the calendar to the community earlier so they can plan and said that he hopes that all the items discussed can be resolved by the next meeting, or at least have the first and last day of school voted on, as if it goes beyond then it would have to be tabled. Dr. Tremblay said that he had spoken with the Chair and Vice Chair about having the second reading not at the next meeting, but at the following meeting in order to bring it to the High School's Faculty Senate and receive their input. He said that he can try and reschedule that to an earlier date in order to meet the deadline for the next meeting.

Motion: To accept the calendar as a first reading as presented understanding that there will be modifications.

Moved: Ms. Maskell

Seconded: Ms. Ottaviani

Roll Call Vote: 8-0-0

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

Announcements

Dr. Tremblay said that a constituent reached out with some questions in regards to transportation and what the District is doing in regards to solving the problems. He said that there is a partnership with MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) to help provide transportation to students 12 and older with their guardian's permission to stops near the schools as they cannot provide door to door service. He said that there will be an information session tomorrow and the following day is when this option will be implemented. He said that the transportation company continues to fail our students by providing 20 or more less drivers than the City has contracted to have and we have taken legal action on the previous transportation company and contractual language and provisions with the current provider. He said that NRT reports out every other meeting, staff have driven Flyer vans and they contracted with coaches so student athletes do not miss out tournaments, and they are looking at leveraging after school programs for students who are waiting for the bus at the end of the day. He said that the alternative is to only provide transportation to students who are eligible, which would be turning back on 3,000 students we are currently transporting to that are not eligible, but for whom could not get to school if not for a bus. He said that we are not paying for services that are not being filled, there are insurance liabilities and legal challenges which makes it so cannot use taxis, Uber, or parent carpools, and they are looking for other vendors who may be able to help out, but many are having the same issues with the amount of drivers. Ms. Sousa said that she sat down with NRT last week to see what advocacy at the state level can be done and legislation was filed with the session to facilitate easier coordination with local Regional Transit Authorities for the communities that have it available.

Dr. Tremblay said that he has finished his residency at all schools after five months and will be meeting with his team to use the information learned to inform the next development of the District's Strategic Plan which will eventually come before the committee. He said that he is still working on communication that will be sent to all staff with a reflection on his residency, themes that have emerged across the District, and what the District has done to address areas of concern that have been raised and areas to focus on in the short term and long term.

Executive Director of Finance & Operations Update

FY23 Operating and Capital Budget

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch said that the FY23 YTD shows 55.35% spent and encumbered and in good financial standing. He said that he is working on end of the year projections to provide to the committee in the very near future. He gave an update on the Capital Budget including that they are opening bids on exterior envelope work at Walsh, a goal to finish the McCarthy and Dunning roof studies by the end of the summer, continuing to do ADA upgrades across the District, and have spent the furniture and Barbieri cafeteria funding.

FY24 Budget Discussions

Mr. Lynch said that he continues to meet with directors and principals on their proposed expenses and new positions for next year. He said that he is constantly in contact with the City administration to see what revenues are looking like, tracking what the Governor is saying regarding State Aid, and working with DESE on projections for what Chapter 70 State Aid we may receive. Mr. Freudberg said that the committee had asked NRT some specific questions that they need answers to for the budget, specifically on where money may or may not make a difference for their employees. He said that at the next meeting he suggests looking into what a high level management review by an external transportation expert would bring to this community, such as Boston did to evaluate current efficiencies, performance, equity, and costs and develop recommendations for the future. He thinks we should look into completing a similar study that could easily be paid for by the savings in transportation.

Discussion and Vote on Revised FY2024 Capital Budget Request and Discussion and Vote on Mid-Year Supplement Funding Requests for the Farley Roof Replacement and King Front Entrance projects

Mr. Lynch said that there was a memo in the packets requesting mid year capital appropriation for two separate projects: \$775,000 for the King front entrance which is currently on the FY24 capital request, but would like to move it to FY23 in order to have the project complete before September, and \$2,171,100 in funding to cover the bid for the Farley roof as costs are increasing and bids are coming in much higher. He said that they had been looking at deferring projects but based on the Mayor's comments earlier they will not do so at this time. Mr. Freudberg noted that this amended request, if approved, would go to the City Council and their Finance Subcommittee and the Farley roof has been deferred since 2018 and this will get it to the finish line.

Motion: To accept the recommendation and recommend to the Mayor to put forward the King front entrance project for \$775,000 and the Farley roof replacement additional appropriation of \$2,171,100 as FY23 off cycle requests.

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

Mr. Lynch said that based on the Mayor's earlier guidance we can put on hold any discussion for any Capital Budget reductions and instead prioritize the projects. Discussion on not needing to vote again on the priorities, as they were already approved in ranked order, and the only changes would be to remove the King front entrance project that was just voted on moving to a FY23 off cycle request.

Vote on MassBay Community College's Six Month Lease Extension of the Farley Building Located on Flagg Drive

Mr. Lynch said that MassBay has requested to extend their current lease that ends on June 20, 2023 for six months from July 1st to the end of December 2023. He said that all the terms in the current contract would stay as is, including what MassBay pays each month, which would be just under \$200,000 for six months in revenue.

Motion: To approve a six month lease extension for MassBay.

Moved: Ms. Hugo **Seconded:** Mr. LaBarge **Roll Call Vote:** 8-0-0

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

Discussion and Vote on Possible Refunds to Families of 2022-2023 School Year Bus Fees

Mr. Lynch said that if we were to refund families for the 2022-2023 school year bus fees it would be to 425 families for a total of \$114,750. He spoke to the process of refunds and how it may take a long time for refunds to be completed. Ms. Moshe said that she filed a Disclosure of Interest as she is a paying parent of a bused child and will be refusing any money back. She said that many families that paid are essentially paying twice if they are getting students to school by alternative means. She said that she would like to use the money that has not been paid to NRT due to underperforming on their contract to fund this.

Motion: To refund \$114,750 (in bus fees) to 425 families.

Moved: Ms. Moshe **Seconded:** Ms. Maskell

Discussion: Ms. Sousa thanked Ms. Moshe for this proposal which is at a time where everything is more expensive and it is the least we can do for parents who have to supplement well past what the expectations are. Mr. Freudberg said that in the past when refunds were given members offered any help that is needed to the City Finance staff since it is a massive project, but a worthy one. He noted that he also filed a Disclosure of Interest in an abundance of caution.

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

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

Annual Evaluation of the School Committee's Executive Assistant

The Chair said that this year she completed the summative evaluation just through TalentEd and not a memo since it was easy to average out the scores as all members who completed it gave the Executive Assistant 5s across the board.

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

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

Discussion: Members expressed being grateful for the Executive Assistant and what she does for members.

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

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

Subcommittee Reports

Mr. LaBarge said that the warrants were signed for a total of \$2,776,559.16 and a payroll total of \$5,255,236.35 on the dates of January 16th and January 27th, 2023.

Mr. Freudberg, as the Chair of the Finance and Operations Subcommittee, said that a meeting will be scheduled before the March 1st full committee meeting to discuss the annual fees that need to be voted on.

Ms. Hugo, as the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment, and Sustainability Subcommittee, said that there will be a meeting on March 14th with the FHS Environmental Club who will present on their goals and initiatives, Keep Framingham Beautiful members will be present to discuss coordination of the annual spring cleanup, and discussion of a plan to have a coordinated effort with FHS, administration, and the School Committee at the Earth Day Festival on April 22nd.

Ms. Ottaviani, as the Chair of the Health and Wellness Subcommittee, said that the subcommittee met in early January and went over the subcommittee's goals, resubmitting to the John Stalker Institute, and education around CPR and AEDs. She said that the Director of Health and Wellness has discussed with the FTA about offering basic CPR, Stop the Bleed, and CPR classes during upcoming professional development days.

Approval of Minutes, Gifts, and Scholarships

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of December 21, 2022.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Ottaviani **Vote:** 7-0-1
(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Barnhill, LaBarge. Abstained: Maskell)

Motion: To approve the Open Session minutes of January 4, 2023.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Ms. Barnhill **Vote:** 7-0-1
(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Freudberg, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge. Abstained: Sousa)

*Ms. Maskell recused herself at 8:37 p.m.

Motion: To approve the Executive Session minutes of October 3, 2022.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Mr. Freudberg **Vote:** 6-0-1
(Yes: Hugo, Moshe, Sousa, Freudberg, Ottaviani, LaBarge. Abstained: Barnhill)

*Ms. Maskell returned to the meeting at 8:38 p.m.

Motion: To approve the Executive Session minutes of October 19, 2022.

Moved: Mr. LaBarge **Seconded:** Mr. Freudberg **Vote:** 7-0-1
(Yes: Hugo, Sousa, Freudberg, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge. Abstained: Moshe)

Additional Public Comment

Sean Silk said that he is from District 2 and was the one who had emailed earlier with the major concern on transportation. He said he was looking for information as he understands the vendor failed, but there is also a gap in service with the kids, as far as using the time that they are waiting effectively and making the most of it which is under the District's control. He said he would like to hear what the District is doing to maximize that time for them and to make up for lost time by not getting to school on time.

Bob Bolles said that he was happy with the Mayor's State of the City Address and thinks he will work well with the School Committee.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Draft 2023-2024 School Year Memo and Calendar

FY23 YTD

FY24 Capital Budget Update

School Committee Executive Assistant Summative Evaluation

Warrants

Draft December 21, 2022 Minutes

Draft January 4, 2023 Minutes

These minutes were approved by the Framingham School Committee in Open Session on February 15, 2023.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on February 16, 2023.