

**Mansfield School Committee Meeting
Minutes for Tuesday, March 03, 2020
Town Hall, 6 Park Row, Mansfield, MA 02048, Room 3ab**

An **Open Meeting** of the Mansfield School Committee was held in room 3AB of the Town Hall on Tuesday, March 03, 2020. The open meeting session was called to order by Chair Kiera O'Neil at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present:

Kiera O'Neil, Chair
Lynn Cavicchi, Vice Chair
Linda Fernando
Lauren Scher
Jenn Walsh

Administration Present:

Teresa Murphy, Superintendent of Schools
Michael Connolly, Assistant Superintendent (Teaching/Learning)
Edward Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent (Finance/Operations)

Members Absent: None

Public Speak:

The following citizens signed up for public speak but turned it over to Vivian Webster representing the group: Ronald Green, 179 Winter Street; Sharyn Jordan, 82 Lawndale Road; Janice Peters, 179 Winter Street.

Vivian Webster, 23 High Street: Parent advocate, social worker spoke on options for Student Opportunities Act spending. The intent of this act is to close achievement gaps for certain sub groups of students including students of color, low income students, English Learners and special education. She is shared the story of Charles Owens 25 Lindon Street. Mr. Owens lost her daughter due to childbirth complications. He has partial custody of his 3 grandchildren including 2 in Mansfield Public Schools. He has had to jump through hoops to obtain special education services for his family. Ms Webster noted that the following suggestions would have helped him. 1) Hire more clinicians and social workers to provide wrap around support or form partnerships with organizations that provide these services. 2) Evidenced Based programs should be offered such as Nurturing Fathers program. 3) Provide teacher / administration development in unconscious bias training. The goal would be to eliminate discriminatory behavior. 4) She asked that there be more interaction with the community to obtain feedback and input into decisions.

Marzouk Mansour, 36 Cottage Street: He is very interested in the opportunity to learn English.

Sozan Henein, 36 Cottage Street: She is very interested in learning more of the English Language.

Nicole Birch, 57 Fairfield Park: Spoke on behalf of families that require EL services. She hopes that the schools can provide EL services for adults. Could this be part of the Student Opportunities Act funding? (Note that Nicole had not signed up to speak; however she was allowed per Chair O'Neil.)

Communications: None

Administrative Reports:

Superintendent (Teresa Murphy):

- At the MIAA All-State Championship meet, Erin Hurley, grade 11, placed 3rd in the All-Around. Lily Goulding received the MIAA Coaches Association Gymnast of the Year award. As a team, Mansfield finished fifth in the state.

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- MHS Senior Vinnie Holmes was awarded the Gold Athletics/Adrenaline Leadership Scholarship at the State Football Coaches clinic at Gillette.
- CJ Glaropoulous, grade 11, is the state champion in his weight category. Antonios Sevastos earned 5th place honors and Will Stratton took 7th place. All 3 will represent Mansfield at the New England Championship Meet next weekend.
- Boys basketball beat Needham to advance to the Division 1 South Title game Friday night at Taunton.
- The MHS cast and crew of Fourteen Lines competed in the preliminary round of the MA High School Drama Festival and will advance to the semifinal round in mid March.
- MHS Percussion Ensemble and Color Guard both earned first place honors at the 2020 WGI Regional Championship Competition (Saturday 2/29/20 in Trumbull, CT)
- MHS seniors James O'Sullivan and Connor Peavey were named winners of the Congressional App Challenge for their work on a gaming app designed to test player reflexes and problem-solving skills.
- Mansfield will participate in the 4th annual Minority Recruitment Fair on March 7th at Milton High School.
- On March 11th, the high school will host the annual career fair showcasing career and educational opportunities after high school.
- Finally, we are staying on top of the Coronavirus situation. We continue to monitor and will send updates to families as needed. We are getting our information from the MA Department of Health along with our local authorities. This is a very fluid situation but we are staying on top of it. Kiera asked about upcoming trips. We are looking at the upcoming Ohio trips and the NYC trips.

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning (Michael Connolly):

- MCAS Testing schedule has been provided. Each school has posted dates on their website. Lynn asked if we could print the district wide list. We will post on the district website.
- The 5th annual Career fair will occur thanks to the hard work of several MHS staff members. 45 vendor tables will be setup. Thank you to Ben Caisse, Chris Hall, Janet Hogan, Nicole Redding, Deb Fournier, Marianne LaHive, Emily Sandman, Jen Jameson, Josh Sanford as well as our community businesses.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations (Ed Donoghue):

Assistant Superintendent Donoghue reviewed recent water testing. There was a change to the lead standard making it more restrictive. The old cutoff was .0015 per billion and the new cutoff is .001 per billion. A few additional items from our previous test no longer pass. (food prep sinks at QMS and MHS. An acceptable solution is flushing the pipes daily. Flushing removes any lead. We have had positive results but are looking for a more permanent solution. Facilities has submitted for a grant to replace 17 water fountains in the district. Statement of interest for boilers has been submitted to the state. We will wait for feedback. Expect to hear in the next few months.

High School Student Representative Report: None

Approval of Warrant:

Warrants	Warrant #'s	Dates	Amount
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Goods & Services	2020-1017	01/07/20	299,472.39
Salary & Wages	2020-14	01/10/20	1,632,382.99
Goods & Services	2020-1018	01/21/20	663,406.67
Salary & Wages	2019-15	01/24/20	1,716,342.20
		\$	4,311,604.25

Motion to approve the minutes by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh
Motion Carries 5 - 0

Approval of Minutes:

Executive Session Minutes of 01-21-20

Motion to approve the minutes by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh
Motion Carries 4 - 0 - 1 (Lauren Scher was absent and abstained.)

Open Session Minutes of 02-11-20

Motion to approve the minutes by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh
Motion Carries 4 - 0 - 1 (Kiera O'Neil was absent and abstained.)

Executive Session Minutes of 02-11-20

Motion to approve the minutes by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh
Motion Carries 3 - 0 - 2 (Kiera O'Neil and Linda Fernando were absent and abstained.)

Gifts: None

Old Business:

Committee Updates:

Audit: New School policy has been developed based on results of the last audit. This will be brought for approval tonight.

CIP: One additional meeting will be held prior to town meeting.

Budget: There have been several meetings to work on the budget. Final number presented tonight.

Facilities: Need to plan next meeting.

Policy: Meeting to be held this week to review several policies.

Master Plan: Met on 2/18. Two additional meetings are planned prior to town meeting.

OPEB Task force: To be discussed tonight.

New Business:

OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) was taken out of order:

Steve Schoonveld presented the findings of the Task Force. This group reviewed funding strategies to ensure we can cover health insurance for our pre-65 retiree costs. This is a multi-year plan that starts now to cover a \$90 million liability that exists today. The proposals will stabilize our current costs and level future costs. A policy was derived to dictate how the liabilities will be paid down including funding of a dedicated OPEB fund. Steve detailed the position we are in; the process of

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review; the policy to be set forth and the funding to be used to start. School Committee must vote to approve. Kiera O'Neil inquired as to whether the Select Board needed to approve first. Steve indicated that there was no required order of approval. Lynn Cavicchi had some questions regarding the wording of Section 2. The discussion of majority vote is listed. However, this phrase is not in the top summary of the policy. Change for consistency. Lauren Scher asked if there were any retirement trends in the schools. Per Teresa, we have not seen any trends as each year changes based on individual employees.

Motion to approve the new OPEB Liability Trust Fund Policy by Jenn Walsh / Lynn Cavicchi

Discussion: Clarification of what is being approved. Tonight the policy will be approved. However, the approval of initial funding will be deferred to the next School Committee meeting so it can be added to the agenda.

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Field Trips:

MHS Varsity Boys Lacrosse to RI 3-28-20

Teresa Murphy introduced the field trip. Lacrosse team will travel by bus to Cumberland High School for a scrimmage. Team will be gone on a Saturday for approximately 5 hours.

Motion to approve the Lacrosse scrimmage game by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Robinson Grade 2 field trip to Woonsocket Stadium Theater, RI 6-3-20

Teresa Murphy introduced the field trip. This is a new event for our second graders. The "Professor Wow's Fun Believable Science show" supports the MA science and technology standards. \$10 student admission plus bus cost (TBD).

Motion to approve the Grade 2 Woonsocket Trip by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Committee had reservations approving without knowing the bus cost. They want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to go.

Motion to remove the Grade 2 Woonsocket Trip motion by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Discussion centered around the standard practice of providing scholarships. Ed Donoghue indicated the bus would likely be approximately \$10 bringing the total to approximately \$20. Teresa Murphy suggested postponing the vote until we had the figures if the Board had concerns. However, we did not have information on cut off dates for registering.

Motion to withdraw the original motion Fails 0 - 5.

Discussion on original motion: It was also noted that MESA provides scholarships to students. Ed and Teresa will speak with Kerri about limiting bus costs and utilizing scholarships. A request was made to vote on original motion as long as costs per student did not exceed \$20.

Motion Carries 5 - 0 (Field trip approved)

Communities That Care 2019 Survey Results:

Head Nurse, Christine Dooling provided a summary of last year's results. To review, this survey is given every other year. It was last given in June 2019 to grade 6, 8 and 10 students. She noted that our health curriculum constantly changes to reflect the results of this survey. Vaping questions were added for the first time this year. She found that Mansfield trends are similar to the overall state results. Questions surrounding life styles indicate continued use of phones and electronics at night which minimizes sleep. The survey will be posted online for

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viewing. Lynn Cavicchi asked if anything was surprising. Christine reported that she was surprised that students perceive "the use of marijuana to be ok." Lauren Scher was concerned about bullying. 26% of grade 6 students perceive electronic bullying to be a problem. It is worth keeping an eye on this. Actual reports are much lower.

2020 - 2021 School Calendar (second reading):

Michael Connolly provided a high level overview. Based on feedback from the committee, the district took another look at professional development days. After discussions with principals, it was decided to cut the number of professional development days by one and remove any Friday professional days so as to not impact student attendance rates. This will be a trial. If we feel that we are in need of adding the extra day back in next year or any year after that, we will do so. This decision may be made based on district initiatives and the need for training in any given year.

Motion to approve the 2020 - 2021 School Calendar by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Lauren Scher asked if there were other ways that we can support professional development. She has some concern with cutting back this development time. Kiera O'Neil asked that we track the impact of the reduced days and re-evaluate prior to creating next year's calendar.

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Internal Control Manual for Federal Grant Funds:

Ed Donoghue addressed this new policy manual for Mansfield Public Schools. The last external audit of our business practices pointed out that we did not have an internal audit control manual in place for the processing of grants. This new document has been established for school committee approval. It has been reviewed by our business office, Teresa Murphy and The town Finance Manager.

Motion to approve the Internal Control Manual for Federal Funds by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Lynn Cavicchi noted that this must be reviewed every 2 years and asked that it get added to the school committee operational calendar. A copy will be kept in the business office and a second with the School Committee Policy Binder.

Motion Carries 5 - 0

School Choice:

Annually school committees must review whether or not to open the district to students from outside the community. Often this is done to manage enrollment needs. Teresa Murphy and Ed Donoghue reviewed our current enrollment as well as projected enrollment for next year.

Questions/answers:

Will adding school choice help with our declining enrollment? For the near future, the district does not feel that it will. We have already taken steps such as reducing the number of teams at QMS, reducing teachers at the elementary level and eliminating high school courses that are low attended allowing the staff to be refocused on more popular classes.

Has the reimbursement amount changed? No, the state still reimburses only \$5000 per student which is about a third of what our per pupil expenditure is. The money is sent directly to the towns rather than the school.

Is there any thought of approving in near future years? We could consider it for grade 9 in the next year or two where we do see a decline. If we did approve we could establish it for grade 9 only. Those students would then be allowed to continue though graduation. We would determine the number of open spots.

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How does this impact our forecasted budget for chromebooks and text books? We may need to adjust our budgets to purchase additional units since our planned purchases reflect the current enrollment decline.

What is the cost per chromebook? Probably \$200 - \$300 per student.

What is Teresa's opinion? Teresa does see that the current grade 7 class is the first to be under 300 students. So she does believe, we need to consider at "some point" but does not feel that we are at that point now. She is also concerned about the low reimbursement amount. We will not look at school choice for middle school because our specials class enrollment is high.

When do the funds get sent to the town? Ed thought that the payments would be made twice per year.

Who is responsible for outplacement costs? If a tuitioned-in student required outplacement or special education services the sending town would be responsible for the cost.

Jenn Walsh: It is her opinion that we should review this in the future but for now we need to get a handle on the current residents including the large uptick in Kindergarten students next year (so far approximately 45 more students than this year.)

Linda Fernando: She is willing to look closer at this for next year.

Lynn Cavicchi: We should not look at school choice as a revenue generator. It should be used as an enrollment management tool. It having school choice allows us to maintain programming then we should look into using. We should focus on the high school and create a strategic plan to manage the enrollment going out several years. The budget subcommittee and FinCom should have input as well. What is the high school vision 5 years down the road?

Kiera O'Neil: We should evaluate how other districts are handling. What are best practices? Challenges?

Ed Donoghue: Generally speaking grade 9 is a good transition year for school choice as that is a time where many students are entering or exiting private schools.

Motion to NOT approve School Choice for 2020-2021 by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Discussion: Once voted, the district must report to the State. Next year, we should have conversations starting earlier in the year to see if we are at a point where we need to begin school choice. School Choice should appear on multiple meeting agendas.

Motion Carries 5 - 0 (School Choice will not be put into place for 2020-2021)

Town Meeting Articles:

Transfer \$25,000 from Free Cash to Special Education Reserve Fund

This money will be used to start the reserve fund that was already approved. The motion will go in front of town meeting.

Motion to approve support of the \$25,000 transfer of funds by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Enter into an extended technology contract for chromebooks

Google has extended the available warranty on chromebooks allowing us to hold on to them for a longer period of time. Extended contracts require approval from the town. Google will now allow a 5 year contract. We are going to go in front of town meeting with a request for 6 years in case Google extends again.

Motion to approve support of extending the existing chromebook contracts to 5 years with the option to go up to 6 years by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

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Motion Carries 5 - 0

Approve Modified FY21 budget:

Budget discussions have been ongoing this spring. As a result, the following budget changes have been made:

Utilize some of the facilities revolver account for electricity costs

Utilize some of the CHAMPS revolver account for natural gas/heating costs

Utilize some of the PAY-RIDE revolver account for transportation costs

Utilize the Lost Book revolver account for text books (\$20K)

Reduce salary costs by \$50K due to forecasts of reduced overtime and the need for fewer subs)

Move some of the operating budget to Capital (\$200K technology and \$100K text books)

The new budget amount is \$53,252,363.

Motion to the new FY21 Budget of \$53,252,363 by Linda Fernando / Jenn Walsh

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Upcoming Agenda Items:

OPEB Funding approval vote

Student Opportunity Act vote

New School Committee Business: None

Other- Items not anticipated by the Chair 48 hours prior to this meeting: None

Documents Referenced:

OPEB Presentation by Task Force

Communities That Care Survey Presentation Summary

FY21 Budget Presentation Updated

Motion to adjourn: At 9:32 p.m., **Motion** to adjourn the open meeting by Jenn Walsh / Linda Fernando

Motion Carries 5 - 0

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane Nugent, Secretary to the
Superintendent & School Committee