



DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes

DATE: January 9, 2012

LOCATION: Harmony Hall

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Bonita Elie, Chairperson
Mr. Matthew Sheehan, 1st Vice Chairperson
Mr. Michael Miles, 2nd Vice Chairperson
Mr. Ronald Mercier
Dr. Michael McNamara

SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:

Dr. Stacy Scott, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Thomas Rose, School Business Administrator
Attorney Edward Morris
Cynthia Curtis, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

The Regular Session Meeting of the School Committee was called to order by Chairperson Bonita Elie at Harmony Hall at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of entering into Executive Session.

Chairperson Elie read into the record the purpose for entering into Executive Session was for an update on negotiations and litigation that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect.

1. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Miles to enter into Executive Session for the reasons stated.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

The regular session meeting was recessed at 6:30 p.m.
The regular session meeting reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:

Attorney Kevin Murphy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Chairperson Elie called for the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for the Peabody Firefighter who lost his life in the line of duty; David Stecchi, former employee; and Jeannette Elie, mother-in-law of Bonnie Elie.

NEW BUSINESS:

Wrestling Tournament Request/Team Recognition

Mr. Woods, Athletic Director, requested that the wrestling team be allowed to participate in their out of state wrestling tournament being held in Connecticut.

2. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Mercier to authorize the trip request for the wrestling team to Connecticut.

Attorney Murphy indicated that the school vans will be utilized and that students must sign a release waiver.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Team Recognition

Coach Michael Riley addressed the Committee and recognized several members of the wrestling team.

- Pat Vossmer, freshman
- Jon Ryan, the first freshman to win the holiday tournament
- Stig McElhinney, sophomore
- Jaycee Hebert, sophomore
- Bryan Preston, sophomore
- Mike Stewart, junior captain
- Jimmy Ryan, junior captain
- George Papageorgiou, sophomore
- Pater Salem, senior

The Committee congratulated the wrestling team for their accomplishments as a team and individuals.

Junior High School Student Recognition

Two students were recognized for their pajama drive efforts as part of the Junior National Honor Society. Erin Batherwich and Jennifer Banks collected over 250 pairs of pajamas for their community service project. These students were also presented with the Dracut Rotary Club's Service Above Self Award in recognition of their efforts. Both students were presented with a certificate from the Committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Dr. McNamara to approve the December 12, 2011 regular session school committee meeting minutes.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

4. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Dr. McNamara to accept the December 22, 2011 Finance Sub-Committee meeting minutes.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

5. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to accept the December 9, 2011 Finance Sub-Committee meeting minutes.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

6. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Dr. McNamara to accept the September 22, 2011 Finance Sub-Committee meeting minutes.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

COMMUNITY INPUT:

No community input

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:

Bills and Payrolls were signed as follows:

Warrant 20120021 by Mrs. Elie, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Miles, and Dr. McNamara

Warrant 20120022 by Mrs. Elie, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Miles, and Dr. McNamara

Mr. Mercier indicated that he had an exemption on the last warrants regarding the use of the school credit card and was waiting for a response from administration. Mr. Mercier expressed concern that charges were made on the card that were related to the recent China trip and this should have been brought to the attention of the Committee. Dr. Scott has reimbursed the district for the two charges.

PRESENTATION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

Brittney Tobey informed the Committee of recent events at Dracut High School with students receiving the John and Abigail Scholarships, National Merit, Foreign Language Honor Society and National Honor Society new inductees. Students will have the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment classes at Middlesex Community College. Advanced Placement exams will be held in May. The DECA Fashion show will be held on January 12th as a fashion show for the prom.

COMMITTEE REPORS

Finance Sub Committee Update

Mr. Sheehan and Dr. McNamara gave an update on the Finance Sub-Committee meeting that was held on January 5th. At this meeting there was a continuous review of the FY12 budget, transportation account status, revolving accounts, transfer accounts, special education tuitions, cost saving measures and review of the FY13 budget schedule. Mr. Sheehan expressed concern about recent comments about the budget that were released prior to the holiday and noted that minutes are taken at the finance meetings and the meetings are open to the public. Dr. McNamara stated that steps need to be put into place to review and control the FY12 budget and indicated that he has requested reports that have not been received as of yet.

Dr. Scott stated that he would like to do more work on the year to year comparison report before providing this to the finance sub-committee. Dr. Scott indicated that the budget was level funded and he has attempted to bring back positions that were a reduction in force and areas of high spending will be reduced. Dr. Scott will keep the finance sub-committee informed.

- 7. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, second by Mr. Miles to initiate a hiring freeze effective January 9th until further notice for any new hires.

Discussion took place that any positions that are for medical leave or replacements will go before the Board. Discussion was also held on the essential and non essential hires. Essential hires would be positions that affect the classroom. Attempts will be made to replace within.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

8. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Miles to initiate a non essential spending freeze.

Discussion was held regarding essential and non essential needs. Dr. McNamara expressed concern with the needs of the schools. Dr. Scott will review encumbered funds and determine what the district can do without and will consult with building principals on their needs.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

Mr. Mercier referred to the December 20th report that was provided to the Committee indicating elimination of positions. Dr. Scott stated that this was a draft proposal and the goal is not to have any layoffs.

Mr. Mercier expressed concern about bargaining with the teachers during the day causing the need for substitutes and that this should be done after hours. Dr. Scott stated that the district is monitoring the use of substitutes and the interest based bargaining with the teachers will move the district forward. Dr. Scott will provide a full report to the Committee at the close of the interest based bargaining. This cost is a split cost between the district and the teachers association.

Mr. Mercier expressed concern with the lack of workbooks and copying materials. Dr. Scott indicated that copies are made as needed and that the district is moving towards a digital curriculum.

Discussion continued on the substitute account line. Mr. Miles expressed concern about meetings during the day which would call for substitute teachers. Dr. McNamara expressed concern about the funding in the substitute line. Dr. Scott anticipates that the substitute line will be ok.

Leon Grande Dedication

Mr. Mercier had a discussion with a family member of Mr. Grande to discuss the dedication of the high school music room. Mr. Mercier and Mr. Miles will meet to review this topic.

Policy Sub-Committee

Mr. Mercier will schedule a meeting with Dr. McNamara to review the recent policy proposals.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

January 10th Campbell School PTO meeting
January 11th Englesby and Parker PTO Meeting and ½ day of school
January 12th DECA fashion show, Parker bingo for books, Special Education PAC meeting
December 13th Campbell School father/daughter dance
December 16th No School
December 17th Junior High PTO meeting
December 18th Brookside PTO meeting
December 19th Finance Sub-Committee meeting
December 21st Englesby Pats Peak trip
December 23rd School Committee Meeting

The Finance Sub-Committee meetings are always posted at town hall, school administration and posted on the school website.

SUPERINTENDENT’S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

General Announcements

Dr. Scott referenced recent and upcoming school events such as fundraisers, concerts, shows, food drives, grants and dances at the junior high school. Parker, Englesby and Campbell School.

Staffing Announcements

Recently hired were a PDD Teacher and a Special Education Teacher who are properly certified/licensed.

Monthly Attendance Profile

The monthly attendance profile was available for the Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

High School Renovation Project

Dr. Scott indicated that there is an opportunity for savings as fire walls are not necessary as originally planned. Meetings are being held to finalize the phase-in project. Dr. McNamara attends the Permanent Building Committee meetings and commended the Permanent Building Committee for their time and work.

Report Requests:

- Mr. Mercier requested that a drop out report be provided for the Committee at the next meeting.
- Dr. McNamara would like to see an update on the school website. Several documents are outdated throughout the website.

MASBO Report:

Mr. Rose indicated that some of the recommendations from the transportation report are being shared with the transportation company. The district is working with the bus company to implement some of the recommended changes for FY13. Mr. Rose indicated that information on the finances/operations report will be provided at the next meeting.

Guest Speakers:

Mr. Mercier and Mr. Miles will work on obtaining a guest speaker, Chris Herren, for Dracut High School. Attorney Morris will offer assistance. An update will be provided to the Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

Legal Counsel Contracts:

Two Attorney contracts expire June 2012. An extension is being offered for two years with no salary increase.

9. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Mercier to extend the contract for Labor Relations Counsel and General Legal Counsel for a period of two years with no salary increase.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

Business Round Table:

Dr. Scott had a meeting with Panasonic Corporation with the possibility of entering into partnerships to bring leadership opportunities to the district. There has been an increase of participation at the meetings.

A third meeting will be held in the spring. Mr. Mercier indicated that any monies raised would have to be accepted by the School Committee as per policy.

Mid-Year Audit:

Dr. McNamara handed out to the Committee budget concerns and indicated that an audit is necessary to review the current budget. Dr. McNamara expressed concerns about not receiving appropriate answers and the comparison of the budget for the past three years. Areas of concern are the available budget, special education tuitions, operational and maintenance budget, Dracut high school, and Englesby Intermediate School.

Motion by Dr. McNamara to move to authorize the Dracut School Committee to expend the funds necessary in order to conduct a thorough mid-year independent audit of the FY12 budget of the Dracut Public Schools. The purpose of said audit is to determine whether or not a deficit situation is likely to exist at year-end close on June 30, 2012 and, if so, the extent of such a deficit. In addition, by the use of commonly accepted accounting principles, the audit report should include recommendations for steps necessary to take at this time to avoid any FY12 budget deficit.

Motion by Dr. McNamara to move that the Dracut School Committee direct the Superintendent of Schools, School Business Manager, their respective staffs and any other school personnel to fully cooperate with the auditor by making all relevant budget documents available while conducting their financial audit.

Motion by Dr. McNamara to move that the Dracut School Committee utilize School Choice funds to cover expenses related to this audit. The Finance Sub-Committee of the Dracut School Committee will be responsible for selecting an appropriate independent auditor.

Mr. Mercier seconded the first two motions. Mr. Mercier seconded the third motion with an amendment to allow the full Board to choose the independent auditor not just the finance sub-committee. It was agreed that the finance sub-committee would make a recommendation to the full board.

Discussion was held on the motions. Mr. Miles expressed concern about the information that was provided to the Committee and that time would be needed to review. Mr. Miles would like this on the agenda for the next meeting to allow the Superintendent and School Business Administrator time to review the information provided and report back to the Committee. Mr. Miles also expressed his thoughts about the motion indicating that the staff cooperate with the auditor.

Attorney Murphy indicated that a friendly amendment could be made to delay the motion for two weeks. Dr. McNamara expressed concern with the delay and would like the issue addressed immediately.

Dr. Scott indicated that he does not feel that an audit is needed. Dr. Scott asked for a delay so that a report can be provided to the finance sub-committee with an updated plan.

Mr. Sheehan indicated that he would like to delay the motion for two weeks to allow administration time to review the report provided. Mr. Sheehan would like a clarification at the next finance meeting and place this on the agenda for the next meeting to revisit the motion at that time.

Mrs. Elie indicated that she would like time to review the document and revisit this topic in two weeks.

Attorney Murphy indicated that the first two motions could be merged. The motion will be merged and Dr. McNamara will remove the objectionable part of the motion. The second motion will be revised to indicate that the finance sub-committee will make a recommendation on an auditor to the full committee.

Mr. Mercier indicated he would like to proceed with the motion and have the audit conducted with no delay.

10. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, by Mr. Miles to delay the motion for two weeks in order to allow administration to review and revisit the issue at the next meeting.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mercier	No
Mr. Miles	Yes
Dr. McNamara	No
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

Motion passed 3-2.

ADJOURNMENT:

11. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Miles to adjourn the regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

The regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee meeting was adjourned at 9: 20p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Curtis
Recording Secretary

List of documents and exhibits:

1. School Committee agenda packet
2. Budget Document