



Approved November 7, 2011

DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes

DATE: October 24, 2011

LOCATION: Harmony Hall

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Bonita Elie, Chairman
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 6:00 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
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes
Mrs. Elie	Yes

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

The regular session meeting reconvened at 7:02 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mr. Sheehan to approve the September 26, 2011 regular session school committee meeting minutes.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:

Bills and Payrolls were signed as follows:

Warrant 20120011 by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Miles, Mr. Mercier and Dr. McNamara

Warrant 20120012 by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Miles, Mr. Mercier and Dr. McNamara

PRESENTATION OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

Zachary Durkin was present to give an update on the happenings at Dracut High School including spirit week, food drive, pep rally, homecoming dance, Leo Club sale to benefit Cancer, Poetry in the courtyard, peer mentor power puff game, health and wellness fair, PSAT testing, and assemblies for the college process. The cheerleaders also placed first in their division.

COMMUNITY INPUT:

No community input

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Sub-Committee Update

Mr. Sheehan and Dr. McNamara gave an update on the Finance Sub-Committee meeting that was held on October 24th. Minutes from the Finance meetings of September and October will be forwarded to the full Committee. Items discussed at that meeting were the end of the year report, transportation account status, grant status, and discussion on the contract for the School Business Administrator.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

October 28th Junior High National Honor Society Fall Harvest Ball
November 2nd ½ day of school and scholarship foundation meeting
November 4th Junior High PTO Dance
November 7th School Committee meeting and Town Meeting
November 8th Campbell PTO
November 9th Englesby and Parker PTO
November 10th Special Education PAC Meeting
November 11th No School – Veteran’s Day
November 14th School Committee Meeting
November 15th Junior High Open House and report cards issued
November 16th Brookside and Parker Open House
November 17th Campbell/Greenmont Open House and high school/elementary report cards
November 18th Junior Semi Formal
November 21st Dracut High open house
November 22nd Dracut High PTO and Englesby Open House
November 23rd ½ day of school
November 24th Thanksgiving
November 25th No School
November 28th School Committee Meeting
November 30th Dracut High Financial Aid Night

SUPERINTENDENT’S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Staffing Announcements

Dr. Scott referred to the staffing announcements in the agenda. Paraprofessionals have recently been added to address class size issues. At Greenmont temporary substitutes have been added to see if there is a need for additional staff. Dr. McNamara inquired if all individuals are appropriately licensed and certified. Dr. Scott indicated that all staff are adequately licensed and certified and if required waivers have been filed.

Monthly Attendance Profile

The monthly attendance profile for September was reviewed.

Other:

Dr. Scott read a letter from Ms. Duda’s class requesting IPADS for students.

Director of Technology:

Dr. Scott introduced Adam Steiner, Director of Technology, to the Committee. Mr. Steiner addressed the committee and gave a brief background on his education, employment, and his future in Dracut Public Schools. Mr. Mercier inquired about seventeen additional days granted in the contract agreement. Dr. Scott indicated that these are days that were negotiated and were granted as a carryover from Mr. Steiner’s previous district. The Committee thanked Mr. Steiner and wished him well.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dracut High School Trip Request

Amy Bailey, Robin Mallory and Julian Sciola were present to request a trip to Disney for the band, orchestra, show choir and color guard.

3. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to approve the trip request to Disney.

Mr. Murphy indicated that he approves the trip request and will receive the travel information from the travel agency.

Vote: Unanimously approved

OLD BUSINESS:

High School Renovation Project Update

Meetings with architects continue. Furnishings, technology and air conditioning are being reviewed. Dr. Scott would like to see parts of the building with air conditioning to help the summer programs and so that summer classes can be centralized.

Out of Country Trip Request

Mrs. Elie passed the gavel to 1st Vice Chair Mr. Sheehan.

Dr. Scott indicated to the Committee that a survey was done at the high school level inquiring about different languages students would like to study. Over 760 students responded to the survey and over 100 students indicated they would like to study Italian and Mandarin learning the culture not just the language.

4. Motion by Mr. Miles to support the endeavor of the Superintendent to attend the trip to China. Dr. McNamara seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion.

Dr. McNamara indicated that at the previous meeting he did not have enough information at the time to support the trip. At the time no survey was completed and he was not convinced that there would be no cost to the district. Dr. McNamara had discussions with Dr. Scott to obtain more clarification.

Dr. McNamara would like to make a friendly amendment to the motion to approve the Superintendent's travel to China, providing that there will be no cost to the Dracut Public Schools and that the Superintendent will consider utilizing personal leave or vacation to cover his absence.

Mr. Miles accepted the friendly amendment to the motion.

Mr. Mercier asked about liability for the school department. Attorney Murphy indicated that the attendees would sign a release of liability.

Mr. Mercier indicated that Dr. Diaz has already attended this trip on a couple of occasions and this could have been used as a tool to the district. Mr. Mercier stated that he has received concerns and inquired about the Chief Academic Officer being on vacation and missing professional development days which affects the faculty and students

Mr. Mercier stated that he is in favor of learning new languages; however, he does not understand why there is a need to travel to China. Mr. Mercier stated for the record that he was not aware that Dr. Scott had paid \$900 towards the China trip and that Dr. Scott should have brought this before the Committee before committing to the \$900 fee.

5. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Dr. McNamara, to approve the Superintendent's travel to China, providing that there will be no cost to the Dracut Public Schools and that the Superintendent will consider utilizing personal leave or vacation to cover his absence.

Roll Call Vote:

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

Motion passes 3-1 with one abstention from Mrs. Elie

The gavel was handed back to Mrs. Elie.

Dr. Scott thanked the Committee for their support. Mrs. Elie thanked Dr. McNamara for reconsidering his vote.

Report Request:

Mr. Sheehan asked that the School Business Administrator contract be on the agenda for the next meeting for discussion.

Dr. McNamara asked that the Table of Organization be on the agenda for the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

MASC Conference and Proposed Resolutions

Resolution number 1 was reviewed by the Committee. This resolution would make vocational schools more accessible to students. Discussion was held to have the delegate make a proposal to change “must” to “may”. Mr. Mercier suggested utilizing the ½ days used for professional development to arrange for students to visit the vocational schools so that time is not taken from the classroom time on learning. Dr. Scott will review this suggestion.

6. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Miles to have the delegate support the resolutions as presented by MASC with a proposal to change the verbiage to resolution number 1 from “must” to “may”.

Vote: Unanimously approved

November School Committee Meeting schedule:

7. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Miles to cancel the November 28th school committee meeting due to the thanksgiving break.

Discussion was held that there is already two other meetings in November. Staff will not be available to provide an agenda for the 28th meeting due to Thanksgiving. Mr. Mercier asked to leave the possibility of an open meeting. The chair can call a meeting if necessary.

Vote: Unanimously approved

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Mercier asked that the vote of waiver for No Child Left Behind on the November 14th agenda.

Dr. Scott indicated that Dracut was mentioned in a recent article in Boston Magazine that Dracut had one of the highest increases in MCAS for grade 10.

Dr. Scott indicated that he held the first meeting of a business round table and another meeting will be held in December.

Mrs. Elie reminded everyone of the pajama drive being held by members of the Junior National Honor Society to benefit the Red Cross. All sizes of pajamas from infants to adults will be accepted.

ADJOURNMENT:

8. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Mercier 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 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Curtis
Recording Secretary

List of documents and exhibits:

1. School Committee agenda packet