



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Committee Minutes
Thursday, December 11, 2020
Educational Support Center**

This meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 2 utilizing Zoom Technology.

PRESENT

Chair	Lee Wolanin	Member, Barre
Vice-Chair	Mark Brophy	Member, Barre
	Dr. Richard Allan	Member, Barre
	Emily Cartier	Member, Hardwick
	Debra Chamberlain	Member, Hubbardston
	David Correia	Member, Hubbardston
	Dave Deschamps	Member, Barre
	William Hansen	Member, Hubbardston
	Fred Jean-Francois	Member, Oakham
	Ned Kelly	Member, Hardwick
	David Marsh	Member, Barre
	Walter Nutter	Member, Oakham
	Marcelino Sarabia	Member, Hardwick
	Peggy Thompson	Member, New Braintree
	Mark Wigler	Member, Hubbardston

ALSO PRESENT

Dr. Sheila Muir	Superintendent of Schools
District Administrators/Staff	Cheryl Duval; Kristin Campione; Colleen Mucha; Andrew Walsh; Adam Couturier; Shelly St. George; Jill Peterson; Tricia Worthington; Sue Musnicki; Chris Carlson; Keri Dubois-Gould; Evan Barringer; Mark Miville; Toni Brown; Julia Tuttle; Stacey Skerry; Clare Barnes; Trisia Erickson
Press:	
Town Officials/Residents:	Dylan Clark, Barre Selectboard member; Craig Peacock of Powers and Sullivan; Parents and community members not identifiable on Zoom
	Greg O'Sullivan, Barre Selectboard member, representing the 5 district towns in the Collective Bargaining process was not in attendance

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:44 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- November 12, 2020 – Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Deschamps to approve the minutes of November 12, 2020. Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

a) Superintendent of Schools

- Superintendent's Report - Dr. Muir reported that Barre resident Pat Kowal had reached out to Mr. Deschamps at the beginning of the school year inquiring as to what she and a group of friends could do to assist the school. It was suggested that they make masks for the elementary students. The district has received hundreds of masks hand made by Pat Kowal, Vickie King, Mary Ann Watson, Sandy Moran, Eileen Bohigian, Kathy Miknaitis, Marilyn Haynes, Barbara Potter, Carol Stanley, Jeanette Sullivan, Mary Tomasiello. Dr. Muir publicly thanked them for their generous donation of time involved in sewing all of these masks.
The district also received approximately 1,000 masks from AIS, a furniture company in Leominster. AIS partnered with the United Way of North Central Massachusetts to continue their philanthropic initiative, Sew the Masks. Their goal is to create and donate up to 1,000,000 high quality, washable and reuseable face masks for first responders and others at high risk of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Dr. Muir also reported on the October 1 enrollment figures. Statewide, there is a trend of lower kindergarten classes. Families decided to hold children out of kindergarten for a year. Overall, the district has 53 few students. When looking at the enrollment figures, we look at resident enrollment, district enrollment and school choice enrollment. The district has a 42% loss in enrollment in kindergarten and a 108% increase in home schooled students. At the state level, there are less kindergarten students and in increase in home schooled students and an increase in private school attendance.
- A survey was sent out to parents in regard to how the first trimester of hybrid, remote and full in school learning models were progressing. Dr. Muir reviewed the survey results (copy attached to minutes) with the Committee. Total participants were: 343 for 100% in person, 143 100% remote and 354 for hybrid. Mr. Hansen stated that he would like to see the school day start later, especially on Mondays. Dr. Muir stated that Mondays are aligned with start time of classes held during the remainder of the week.
- Dr. Muir reported on the number of Covid positive cases. To date, there have been 2 positive staff members and 9 positive students. Thirteen staff members have had to quarantine due to being a close contact. Of that number, only three were due to one of the student cases. One hundred twenty-three students have had to quarantine due to being a close contact. Of those, 36 were due to positive classmates and 20 were due to athletics exposure with field hockey and cross country. If a student is a close contact, they switch to the remote learning model. If a staff member is in quarantine, it becomes more difficult. The district is very limited on subs and on extra staff.
- Dr. Muir also reported on the CARES Act funding that the district towns are generously sharing with the district. The district requested that each town fund laptops for the staff in their local schools and Chromebooks for students in their town schools.
- Dr. Muir had Mr. Devine report on the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) Evaluation. The high school is currently undergoing NEASC accreditation. The HS had a virtual visit from the team yesterday. Accreditation has changed from every ten years to ongoing. NEASC compared their assessment with the high school's own self study which looks at a set of standards and compare what we are doing with what they think we should be doing. Yesterday's virtual visit consisted of 6 team members and our team received very good feedback today on culture, facilities, and work ethic.

- Mark Miville, Athletic Director, reviewed the protocols for winter sports which will consist of JV and Varsity Basketball as well as Ice Hockey. Teams will practice for a period of 90 minutes. Teams will play one school per week, home and away. There will be no spectators in the gyms, including parents. Indoor track is on the same schedule as football – Fall II – with a late February start. Wrestling, outdoor track, baseball, softball and girls’ golf are slated for spring with an April start.

b) Director of Administrative Services

- Presentation of Warrants – Payroll Warrants 11 & 12 and AP warrants 16FQ, 17A, 18, 19A, 20FP were approved by the warrant subcommittee.
- FY20 E&D has been certified by DOR/DLS at \$586,522, however, adjustments were made totaling \$9,718 due to timing so the available amount is \$576,803. This is the lowest E&D has been since FY16. This is due to a reduction of Medicaid reimbursements and lower than projected Pre-K fees due to refunds as result of closure due to COVID-19. Additionally, the committee made the decision to use the unencumbered budget balance to offset FY21’s budget rather than have the balance drop to E&D. The committee has appropriated \$427,000 of certified E&D to the following year’s budget revenue sources for the past 4 years. This will need to be reviewed when FY22’s budget is being built.
- FY22 Oil bid was awarded at a cost of \$1.6999; a 45 cent (21.2%) reduction from the current year’s price of \$2.1547/gallon.
- Food Service Update – Participation in the weekly distribution of free meals has been declining after the 11/9 distribution. This Monday’s distribution was for 263 students. There is concern that the weather may impact participation and are looking into the cost to rent a tunnel. The parent survey results indicated that opening earlier (3:30 instead of 4:00 and staying open later (7 pm rather than 6 pm_ may increase participation. As of December 21st, the department will start distribution at 3:30 p.m. prior to making the decision to remain open until 7:00 p.m., the director is reviewing options to see if there is staff available to work that later, as well as forecasting costs. A later end time may result in the requirement to pay staff overtime wages, which will affect the bottom line.

c) Teacher Advisory Council

- Evan Barringer, President of the QRTA, reported that our teachers are continuing to fight through exhaustion and stress. He believes we are in the second wave and definitely seeing higher positivity rates in local towns. He continues to receive texts and phone calls from staff in regard to the climbing numbers in the area.

d) Student Advisory Council

- Matthew Erickson, 8th grade student, reported on hybrid learning in the middle/high school. Matthew reported that he feels safe in the building. He feels that students are taking precautions and following the protocols that have been set up. He does believe that learning is more challenging and misses hearing lessons from his teachers live. Matthew particularly misses live science experiments.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Administrative Review

- No report was given

b) Audit

- Review and acceptance of FY20 Audit Report – Craig Peacock, Partner for the Auditing Firm Powers & Sullivan reviewed the FY20 audit report, financial statement and federal report. Mr. Peacock reported that Cheryl Duval and the financial team were audit ready. The audit was done virtually, and all reports were consistently on time and accurate. Any questions that the team had during the audit were answered quickly and accurately. Mr. Peacock indicated that he had no unusual items to report to the Committee. The results of audit testing resulted in a “clean audit” or “no findings”, which is the best you can expect. In summary, Mr. Peacock indicated that there was nothing to report to consider a deficiency, no internal control issues, and the FY20 audit was very positive and consistent with previous years. He did discuss student field trips that travel out of state and could not see where the Committee

had voted to approve the Washington DC trip. The School Committee publicly commended Director Duval and the financial team for the professionalism and exemplary job done through the audit process. Mr. Brophy publically thanked Mrs. Duval and her team for a job well done. Motion was made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to accept the Auditor's report as written. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- c) Budget
 - No report was given. May have first meeting in January at some point
- d) Central Office
 - No report was given
- e) Collective Bargaining
 - Will be going into executive session to ratify the Secretarial, Custodial and School Nutrition contracts. Discussion with paraprofessionals is ongoing,
- f) Plant and facilities
 - Hubbardston roof project is moving forward with final plans. The project will start at the conclusion of the school year and out to bid in April.
- g) Policy & Review
 - Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Deschamps to remove the following policies from the table:
 - EBCFA – Face Coverings
 - JLCB – Immunization of Students
 - ACA-ACAB – Rescinded & Replaced by Policy AC – Non-Discrimination and Harassment
 - EBC Supplemental – Policy on COVID Related IssuesMotion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
 - Next meeting will be held on Monday, January 11th.
- h) Special Education
 - Reviewed progress report submission for ELLs audit which was completed and accepted. Discussed transportation of special education students. Mrs. St. George discussed current PK enrollment and the current wait list.
- i) Technology
 - No report was given. Meeting prior to January full committee meeting.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- None

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS

- Question was raised as to whether or not the air exchange study had been completed. The district is still waiting information from Pioneer Valley Environmental.
- Mr. Wolanin commented that our district is collaborating and cooperating to educate our children through this pandemic. It has taken hard work from staff, parents and students, but everyone is doing a fantastic job.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- None.

9. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to move into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. The Committee will return to open session.

Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The committee returned to open session at 10:02 p.m.

10. REPORT AND DISCUSSION OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH POSSIBLE VOTE

- Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to ratify the summary of agreement to the successive contract for the Quabbin Regional School District Nutrition Professionals for the period of 7/1/20 – 6/30/23.
Motion passed by a roll call vote of 12-1-2: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – no; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – abstain; Mr. Hansen – yes; Mr. Correia – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – abstain; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois – yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes;
- Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to ratify the summary of agreement to the successive contract for the AFSCME Council 93 Local 524 AFL-CIO Custodial/Maintenance for the period of 7/1/20 – 6/30/23.
Motion passed by a roll call vote of 12-1-2: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – no; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – abstain; Mr. Hansen – yes; Mr. Correia – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – abstain; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois – yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes;
- Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to ratify the summary of agreement to the successive contract for the Quabbin Regional School District Office Association for the period of 7/1/20 – 6/30/23.
Motion passed by a roll call vote of 12-1-2: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – no; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – abstain; Mr. Hansen – yes; Mr. Correia – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – abstain; Mr. Nutter – yes; Mr. Jean-Francois – yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes;

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Brophy to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.
The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Bennett
School Committee Secretary