



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Committee Minutes
Thursday, February 11, 2021
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
	Deb Chamberlain	Member, Hubbardston
	David Correia	Member, Hubbardston
	Dave Deschamps	Member, Barre
	William Hansen	Member, Hubbardston – Arrived 6:35 p.m.
	Ned Kelly	Member, Hardwick
	David Marsh	Member, Barre – Arrived 7:30 p.m.
	Walter Nutter	Member, Oakham
	Marcelino Sarabia	Member, Hardwick – Arrived 6:35 p.m.
	Peggy Thompson	Member, New Braintree
	Mark Wigler	Member, Hubbardston

ABSENT

Fred Jean-Francois	Member, Oakham
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ALSO PRESENT

Dr. Sheila Muir	Superintendent of Schools
District Administrators/Staff	Cheryl Duval; Kristin Campione; Colleen Mucha; Andrew Walsh; Adam Couturier; Gregory Devine; Jill Peterson; Tricia Worthington; Sue Musnicki; Chris Carlson; Keri Dubois-Gould; Eleni Marinelli; Shannon Harris; Captain Daniel Brennock; Ashley Cranston;

Press:

Town Officials/Residents:	Students Sarah McMenemy and Nathan Legare; Clare Hendra, Oakham FinCom; Stephen Dollinger, Oakham FinCom; Jenny Laramee Other parents and community members not identifiable on Zoom
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1. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 11, 2021 – Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Mr. Kelly to approve the minutes of January 11, 2021. Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

a) Superintendent of Schools

- Superintendent's Report – Dr. Muir reported on the weekly COVID Dashboard that is distributed on Mondays to parents and staff. This past week we had 2 positive students and 2 positive staff members.
- Dr. Muir reported that the district is currently in the process of setting up the process for pooled Covid testing with Project Beacon for students and staff. This will be done with consent only from families and staff. The cost of this program is being paid for by the state for six weeks from the start of the program. After that, districts can make the decision to continue at their own expense. Pooled Covid testing is done by testing a group or "pool" of students or staff (up to 10 in a pool), if the pool returns a positive case, that pool of people will then be tested individually to determine where the positive test result originated from. This testing will allow the district to identify students/staff who may be asymptomatic and infectious to others. Discussion ensued.

Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to support the district's participation in the pooled testing program with Project Beacon as directed by administration for the initial six week program.

Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- Dr. Muir reported that we learned today that there are new transportation guidelines. Capacity limitations on bussing for elementary students has been reduced and reduces limitation on MS/HS restrictions as well, as long as a community does not have a high prevalence of COVID. At this time, the district is in a good position and does not have to make changes. If changes do eventually need to be made, the discussion will be brought back to School Committee for a vote to make the change in our Opening Plan.
- Winter athletics is winding down with several makeup games due to weather and games missed due to COVID. Fall II season is starting February 22nd with football and indoor track starting on March 15th. Indoor track events will be held outdoors starting in April. Football will be played in a pod of 6 schools which include Quabbin, Ayer-Shirley, Murdock, Narraganset, Gardner and Lunenburg. Games will be played in Gardner or Lunenburg on turf fields. Gardner will be our home field and we will practice once a week on their turf. MIAA committee is still discussing fans in the stands for outdoor events. At this time there is a 50 person limit for football, but committee is considering an increase.

b) Director of Administrative Services

- Presentation of Warrants – Payroll Warrants 13, 14, 15 & 16 and AP Warrants 21A, 22FZ, 23B, 24A, 25I, 26FQ, 27B, 28A, 30FO were approved by the warrant subcommittee
- Food Service Update – The USDA will be adding an additional \$0.55/meal to all meals served in March, April, May and June up to \$70,000. 275 meals were served on Monday, February 8th. High of over 400 in January. Food Service Director has applied for five grants. Usually, only 70 -80 districts apply, but this year over 200 applications have been filed.

c) Teacher Advisory Council

- No report was given

d) Student Advisory Council

- Eleni Martinelli, Student Government Advisor, as well as students Sarah McMenemy and Nathan Legare were in attendance. Both students spoke of their involvement in student council and drama. Drama is unable to perform in live performances at this time. They are currently planning for a virtual performance at some time.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Administrative Review

- No report was given

b) Audit

- No report was given

c) Budget

- The budget subcommittee met last week. Director Duval gave a comprehensive report on the building of the FY22 budget. In calculating the FY22 budget, administration felt it was best to base the budget on our current teaching models. Ms. Duval reviewed the FY21 budget assistance used to offset the General Fund Budget total and assessments to member towns. In addition, member communities shared Federal CARES Act funding to purchase Chromebooks for elementary students and laptops for elementary teachers. Discussion then ensued in regard to preliminary House 1 Chapter 70 funding which implements the first year of the Student Opportunity Act. House 1 allows district to use a portion of ESSER II funds to satisfy increases in local contribution requirements. Regional ESSER II Allocation for Quabbin is \$709,718, however, a portion of this is supposed to be used to offset local minimum contribution for the towns. Ms. Duval reviewed the district's current enrollment of in district students, students who "choice out", as well as students who attend Quabbin through the School Choice program. There were many questions raised when building the budget for FY22, mostly related to what the next school year will look like. In FY21, the district enrolled approximately 54 new home school families. Will these families return to Quabbin if we go back to full in person learning? Where will our students who were learning remotely be in regard to academics and social/emotional needs? Should we consider a transitional classroom for incoming first grade students? How many kindergarten students were held back that we were unaware of? How many families that were fully remote will choose to return? Discussion ensued as to bussing needs, social emotional needs and staffing needs. At this time, there are currently 10.40 proposed staffing requests. These include: 2 classroom teachers at RLS; 1 classroom teacher at HES; a Humanities teacher at the High School; a library/media director at the MS/HS; a regular Ed para at RLS for a proposed transitional grade 1 district wide classroom; Special Education para at the MS; Special Education para at the HS; 2 Special Education paras at RLS; Special Education para at HCS. These staffing requests amount to approximately \$480,152.20.

As discussed at past School Committee meetings, there are critical Capital Projects and Equipment needs.

Ms. Duval then reviewed the increases and decreases in the proposed budget. These include: Instructional Support increase of \$504,886 or 3.7%; Facilities increase of \$284,468 or 8.9%; Technology Infrastructure increase of \$65,560 or 12.6%; Benefits increase of \$1,298,796 or 25.3%; School Choice & Charter Tuition decrease of 189,776 or 18.8%; Instructional Support increase of \$390,499 or 8.3%; Special Education tuition decrease of \$15,994 or 8.4%.

The FY22 Preliminary Budget, prepared under assumptions outlined in the presentation amount to a budget total of \$37,178,779 which represents an increase of \$2,185,238 or 6.2%.

d) Central Office

- No report was given

e) Collective Bargaining

- Paraprofessionals are the last group to ratify. Next meeting will be during the first week of March.

f) Plant and facilities

- No report was given

g) Policy & Review

- Meeting was held on February 3rd. The district is launching the QRSD Equity Imperative and is working with a consultant, Dr. Kalise Wornum of KW Diversity, Inc. Dr. Wornum specializes in helping school districts improve teaching and learning while training educators to become culturally proficient. Initial task force members include Dr. Muir, Janet Hicks, Adam Couturier, Chris Carlson, and Colleen Mucha. The full task force will include approximately 25 teachers, paras, tutors and administrators.

- Blended learning was also discussed at the subcommittee meeting. Different platforms used were discussed as well as the district's partnership with the Highlander Institute.

h) Special Education

- No report was given

i) Technology

- No report was given

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- None

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS

- Dr. Allan read a thank you letter he received for the scholarship he awarded from Max Leroux, class of 2021. Max is attending Northeastern University and Dr. Allan reported he is an A student.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- McCarthy & Sons Bus Contract Rollover – Motion made by Mr. Brophy and seconded by Dr. Allan to exercise the School Committee's 2-year extension option in the contract with JP McCarthy & Sons, LLC to provide regular transportation for the school years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.
Motion passed with a roll call vote of 13-0-1: Dr. Allan – yes; Mr. Marsh – yes; Mr. Brophy – yes; Mr. Deschamps – yes; Mr. Kelly – yes; Mr. Sarabia – yes; Ms. Cartier – yes; Mrs. Chamberlain – yes; Mr. Hansen – yes; Mr. Correia – yes; Mr. Wigler – yes; Mrs. Thompson – abstain; Mr. Nutter – yes; Chairman Wolanin – yes.
- Captain Daniel Brennock reviewed the itinerary for a trip to Iceland in April 14 – 22, 2022. The purpose of the trip is to raise cultural and global awareness, environmental/geological awareness, as well as strategic military/history significance. The cost of the trip is approximately \$4,200 which includes flights, accommodations, meals as stated, transportation around the island, entrance to all excursions and planned sights and full time tour director.
Motion made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Kelly to approve the NJROTC trip Iceland April 14 – 22, 2022 with the usual provisos.
Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

9. REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

- None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Dr. Allan and seconded by Mr. Brophy to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.
The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Bennett
School Committee Secretary