

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Monday, December 16, 2019
John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant Street, Greenfield MA

Present: Katie Caron (KC) (arrived 6:10); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson (GJ); Adrienne Nunez (AN); William Martin (WM); Cameron Ward (CW)

Absent: None

Also present:

SEPAC members Autumn Mercier, Mary Traver, Crystal Zimmer; Matt Holloway, Director of Pupil Services; Stephen Nembirkow, Business Manager; Atty. Peter Smith; other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM, CW), Chair Nunez opened the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

II. Executive Session

AN announced intent to move into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c 30A, §21 (7) To comply with or act under the authority of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements (Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§22(f)(g), (Executive Session Minutes October 9, 2013 through November 18, 2019).

GJ moved to enter Executive Session. SE 2nd. Yes: SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM, CW. Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 5:06 p.m.

Returned to public session at 6:10 p.m.
KC joined the meeting 6:10 p.m.

IV. Public Comment

None

III. Approval of Minutes

GJ moved to approve minutes of September 23, 2019. 2nd SE. Motion passed 6-0-1 (WM abstain).

V. Reports

A. Superintendent

JH announced that Jake Toomey, Four Corners Principal, is leaving for a position outside GPS. Will be seeking parent/teacher representatives for selection committee.

VI. New Business

A. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Update

SEPAC members Autumn Mercier, Mary Traver, Crystal Zimmer presented report of activities and goals, as outlined in written report. Noted good relationship with Holloway. Thanked School Committee for school-bus cameras and support for IAs. Looking to be valuable as Advisory Committee to the School Committee.

B. English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) Update

GJ moved to approve establishment of Greenfield ELPAC with purposes consistent with MGL 71A §6A. KC 2nd.

Matt Holloway provided background of ELPAC's purpose. English learners approx. 5% of GPS student population. Initial parent meeting held Nov. 20.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Special Education Out-of-District (OOD) Placements Update

Matt Holloway presented update, including:

- FY19 = 37 students in OOD. Currently 37 in full-year OOD private schools, 4 DCF students in process, 3 students in short-term placements.
- Primary reasons: emotional impairment, trauma, attention disorders that escalate
- Announced today, Circuit breaker to include transportation costs, starting at 20% reimbursement. Calculation will be complex with GPS providing own special ed transportation.
- Lack of space limits some GPS special programs
- Request for Holloway to send budget figures to School Committee

D. Update on DESE Audit

Audit pending, in process. Includes Jay Sullivan (DESE), City Finance Director and staff. Discussion includes school department's direct and indirect costs, ideal cost-sharing of Chap. 70 funds.

E. Executive Session

AN announced intent to move into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c 30A, §21, (1) To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual (Director of Pupil Services, Principal of Newton School)

AN moved to enter Executive Session. SE 2nd. Yes: KC, SE, SH, GJ, AN, WM, CW. Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 6:57 p.m.

Returned to public session at 8:40 p.m.

F. Public Session Release: Executive Session Minutes

AN moved to release the following Executive Session minutes to the public, having been reviewed and redacted by legal counsel, and because they no longer warrant non-disclosure under the Open Meeting Law:

- 2013 – Oct. 9, Nov. 6, Nov. 13, Dec. 11
- 2014 – Jan. 29, Feb. 20, July 2, July 30, Sept. 10, Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10
- 2015 – Feb. 11, Feb. 23, March 11, March 17, April 8, May 13, May 28, June 10, June 20, June 25, July 6, Sept. 9, Dec. 9, Dec. 30
- 2016 – Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Feb. 24, March 24, May 24 revised, June 8 revised, June 15, July 13, Aug. 10, Sept. 14, Sept. 22, Nov. 9
- 2017 – Jan. 11, April 18, May 30, June 14, Oct. 11
- 2018 – Feb. 14, Feb. 28, March 12

SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

G. FY21 Budget Development Goals & Direction

JH recommended budget goals be aligned to Superintendent's goals, desired student outcomes, and continuing work re: school/city cost-sharing.

CW moved to make a recommendation to the next School Committee to form a Budget Subcommittee. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget goals discussion:

- Preserve students' options, including sports, clubs, electives, arts, music
- Budget discussions to be positive: "what we're going to do rather than what we're going to cut"
- Goal: Superintendent's draft budget by end of January to allow time to discuss
- Budgets are moral and realistic documents
- Participatory budgeting process?

H. Green River School Update

Supt. continues to work on plan with community partners/liaisons. Using Green River building required for MSBA reimbursement. Heating system is Council's responsibility. Look to open in Fall 2020. Barriers to using Green River as elementary school: small size, lacks economy of scale, no room for more than one class of any grade; redistricting would disrupt families' current connections to neighborhood schools.

I. Financing for Purchase of Vans

- Agenda request from WM late afternoon today re: Nembirkow and Voudren pursuing financing, purchase of vans for special ed transport.
- Must purchase go through City Procurement Office and city treasurer sign loan, or are vans under special education exemption?
- WM bringing as emergency agenda item to clarify he is not responsible for violations. City Council must approve contracts beyond 3 yrs. Concern that current GPS contracts may be in violation, procurement process not followed.
- No ill intent. Seek solution.

GJ moved that, in light of the Mayor's concerns about the issues raised tonight, the Administration ensure that they are following the regulations properly and work with the Mayor's office to communicate about the issue. SE 2nd.

School Committee minutes to be used to guide review. Supt. awaiting written procedures from City Procurement Office.

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Closing Remarks

Members noted year's last meeting, expressed gratitude for service of outgoing members, especially Chair Nunez and Mayor Martin.

VIII. Adjournment

AN moved to adjourn. KC 2nd. Meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda December 16, 2019
2. Draft minutes: September 23, 2019