

GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES: Tuesday, April 14, 2020
Greenfield MA

Note: This meeting was held fully remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20.

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); Glenn Johnson (GJ) (left at 7:09); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW) (joined 7:19)

Absent: None

Also present: Steve Nembirkow, Business Manager; Karin Patenaude, Principal, GHS; Nancy Putnam, Principal, Federal Street School; other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW), Chair Proietti opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

II. Approval of Draft Minutes:

JW moved to approve minutes, as amended, of April 7, 2020. GJ 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW, RW. Motion passed unanimously.

Corrections:

- V. A. Discussion: AP relayed advice from Liz Lafond, Mass. Association of School Committees, ~~clarified~~ that School Committee...
- V.A. Discussion: SH disagreed that School Committee had no role in approving as a new program, especially given budget expense.
- V.D. Vacancy: ~~GPS cannot undertake search during pandemic.~~ Clarify that Supt. did not advise us to undertake a search.
- V.A. Remote Learning Plan: "SH SE made a motion that the School Committee is encouraged...."

III. Public Comment - None

IV. Reports

A. Chair (AP)

Support for Remote Learning Plan. Acknowledged work of JH, GJ, SE for work with union on MOA and expectations.

B. Superintendent (JH)

- First week of Remote Learning Plan. Re-sent Remote Learning message to families today. All teachers working on classroom websites; high-quality, flexible assignments. Commend school staff, parents.
- Plans in place for feedback, continued improvement. Each school has implementation team to support families & staff.

C. Subcommittees & SC Representatives

1. Budget Subcommittee

SH moved that the Budget Subcommittee become active and that its first study be how our current year budget, revenues and expenditures are impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and also the 21 budget and how we are going to meet expenses in the best way possible. SE 2nd. Roll call vote: YES – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed unanimously.

V. New Business

A. Grading – Credit/No Credit, GPA, Final Exams

1. GMS and GHS

Supt. Harper described GMS and GHS credit/no-credit grading, as recommended by Commissioner and adopted within GPS Remote Learning Plan. GHS: No final exams, need to re-weight grades.

GJ moved to support the procedure for middle and high schools as put forward by the Superintendent. SE 2nd.

Discussion:

- Concern: “It only takes a couple zeros for a student to fail.” JH clarified zero-grade given when students have ability & technology but choose not to do assignment. Teachers to give credit to students who show effort.
- Can students request incomplete & make up work in summer? Karin Patenaude: Not yet decided; plans work within current return-to-school date of May 4.
- Concern re: equity & technology. JH: Chromebook given to every student who needed one; families can get affordable GCET internet or free access to school wi-fi from parking lot.
- Concern re: at-risk students. Patenaude: Staff systems (e.g., student support meetings, guidance meetings) to follow up with students who are not engaging.

Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Elementary schools

JH reviewed proposed letters to send to parents to replace standards-based report cards. If child is participating at their appropriate level, they will get credit.

SH moved to pick up discussion of credit/no-credit at elementary level at Committee’s next meeting and to appreciate efforts of administrators and teachers to develop clear credit/no-credit guidelines for elementary students. SE 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – SH, JW; No – KC, SE, GJ, AP. Motion failed 4-2.

KC moved that we accept the proposed concept of credit/no-credit as a way of reporting to parents of elementary school students, with the understanding that the language we see tonight may change but the concept will remain the same. GJ 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed unanimously.

(Glenn Johnson left the meeting at 7:09 p.m.)

B. Technology & Chromebooks

GPS staff cleaned & distributed 485 Chromebooks. “Massive undertaking.”

JH summarized emergency procurement request, prepared by GPS/City procurement office, for 500 Chromebooks with 5-yr warranty.

Chromebooks loaned to families, schools need them returned, but anticipate wear & tear.

National backorder, desire to initiate purchase process soon.

Cost: \$141,000

Possibly reimbursable under CARES Act.

Concern that meeting materials inadvertently omitted cost/purchase details.

(Roxann Wedegartner joined the meeting at 7:19 p.m.)

SE moved to have Budget Subcommittee further review the cost of additional purchases [of Chromebooks] at their next meeting. JW 2nd.

Roll call: YES – AP, JW, SH, KC, SE; Abstain – RW. Motion passed 5-0-1.

C. AEL Tuition

Letter from AEL Principal Tom King recommends waiving preschool tuition. Tuition not being collected since school closure. Preschool teachers are working & being paid. AEL students included in remote learning plan.

JW made a motion to move the AEL tuition discussion to the Budget Subcommittee. SE 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – AP, JW, SH, KC, SE; Abstain – RW. Motion passed 5-0-1.

D. Remote Learning Plan

JH reported on launch 2 days ago. Teachers, specialist educators reaching out to students. Special educators working with families to develop special education remote learning plans. Reassured parents of support, flexibility.

Consensus to follow implementation as work-in-progress, review at next meeting.

VI. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2), (3) & (10): (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; (3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; (10) To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information provided in the course of activities conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier under a license granted by the department of public utilities pursuant to section IF of chapter 164, in the course of activities conducted as a municipal aggregator under section 134 of said chapter 164 or in the course of activities conducted by a cooperative consisting of governmental entities organized pursuant to section 136 of said chapter 164, when such governmental body, municipal aggregator or cooperative determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling or distributing electric power and energy. *Note: (10) is related to transportation.*

SE moved to enter Executive Session. SH 2nd. Roll call: Yes – AP, JW, SH, KC, RW, SE.

Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 7:37 p.m.

Returned to public session at 8:25 p.m.

(Roxann Wedegartner left the meeting.)

V. New Business (continued)

E. Memorandum of Agreement with Greenfield Education Association

JW moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the GEA. SE 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – AP, JW, KC, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Unit A

KC moved to approve Appendix A (Unit A Expectations in Remote Learning Plan). JW 2nd.

Yes – AP, JW, KC, SH, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

G. Unit C

JW moved to approve Appendix C (Unit C Expectations in GPS Remote Learning Plan). KC 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – AP, JW, KC, SH, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

H. Transportation, Out-of-District Placement Costs (Bills for Non-Service)

SH made a motion to move to Budget Subcommittee for further discussion and review. KC 2nd.

Roll call vote: Yes – AP, JW, KC, SH, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjournment

JW moved to adjourn. SH 2nd. Roll call: Yes – AP, JW, KC, SH, SE. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Farber

Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Agenda April 14, 2020
2. Draft minutes: April 7, 2020
3. School Newsletters (online)
4. Credit/No-Credit at Elementary Level
5. Memo from Supt. Harper, "GPA, Credits, etc.," April 13, 2020
6. GPS Learning Plan & Chromebook Roll Out (Executive Summary)
7. Memo from Tom King, AEL Principal, re: waiver of tuition, April 13, 2020
8. Announcement: Release of Remote Learning Plan, April 9, 2020
9. GPS Remote Learning Plan, April 9, 2020