

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, March 13, 2019**
John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant Street, Greenfield MA
Approved 04.10.19

Present: Katie Caron (KC); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); Susan Hollins (SH); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN)

Absent: Cameron Ward (CW)

Also present: Green Wave Girls Basketball Team and coaches; Stephen Nembirkow, Business Manager; other school staff and citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SE, SH, WM, AN), Chair Nunez opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

SH moved to approve minutes of February 13, 2019. KC 2nd. Motion passed.

SH moved to approve minutes of February 25, 2019. KC 2nd. Motion passed 4-0-1 (WM abstain).

KC moved to approve minutes of March 7, 2019. SE 2nd. Motion passed 4-0-1 (WM abstain).

III. Public Comment

AN reviewed Committee's public participation policy. WM noted recent ruling re: Natick School Committee, cannot prohibit adverse or negative comments.

Molly Sedaris, parent, spoke in support of GMS, in disagreement with March 5 *Recorder* article re: lack of civility. AN noted that topic is not on agenda but allowed comment.

JH requested to add email from WM into record. AN: emails are already in public record.

Susan Voss, parent, whose husband wrote letter re: civility, described son's difficult experiences at GMS, asked for dialogue toward solution, not blame.

IV. Reports

A. Student Representatives

M.B. reported on events at GHS, including winter sports, club activities, including Taste of World Cultures, band telethon/fundraiser, and March 28 open house.

B. Superintendent (JH)

JH led applause for Green Wave Girls Basketball Team, state semi-finalists, and coaches.

JH recognized Grinspoon Excellence in Teaching Award winners:

- Tamara Grogan, French Teacher, GHS
- Micky Warren, Grade 1 Teacher, Newton School
- Rachel Sauter - Grade 3 Teacher, Discovery School at Four Corners

Reported on:

- Upcoming events and school fundraisers
- GHS phone system is working following one-day outage last month; uses internet-based phone.
- Federal Street, Newton, Four Corners participated in Read Across America.

- GMS theater performance of “Hoodie”
- Financial reports
- School newsletters
- Superintendent’s social media activity

C. Subcommittees

1. Budget & Finance (WM on behalf of CW)

Open Meeting Law Complaint response, submitting to Attorney General 3/14, copying School Committee members.

2. Health, Safety & Facilities (KC)

- Reviewing bus routes
- Reviewing new School Resource Officer MOU draft language from Attorney General; police chief seeking legal opinion
- Fire chief, police chief do not recommend using schools as long-term emergency shelters. GMS is town’s only incident emergency shelter (e.g., storm-related power outage); GMS generator maintenance taken over by DPW.

3. Policy & Program

Last meeting cancelled due to snow

4. Personnel & Negotiations – No report

Committee Representatives

5. Collaborative for Educational Services (SE) – No report

6. Town Planning and Construction Committee (SH) – No report

V. Business

A. Financial Reports

- Funds for teachers’ pay during summer after July is encumbered in a reserve account from prior year.
- In current budget (not created by Nembirkow), some staff not coded correctly; he will move funds to correct those errors.
- \$1.28 million in revolving accounts to be transferred to operating account.
- Out-of-district account to be spent down, as planned.

B. 2019-2020 School Year Calendar

JH provided overview of revised calendar, which reflects input from contractual units, parents:

First day of school: August 28; last day June 18 (includes 5 snow days)

October open house, different dates for GMS/GHS and elementary schools; earlier in year

Vacation weeks similar to last year’s calendar

SE moved to approve draft calendar for 2019-2020 school year. KC 2nd.

Discussion: Some districts have eliminated February/April breaks, substituting one-week vacation in March; Committee could consider for future years, allowing for significant public input.

Motion passed unanimously.

C. Proposed Draft Changes to School Website

SE provided background to her request to revise, including clearer info on Subcommittees' responsibilities.

AN moved that Policy and Program Subcommittee review the draft webpage changes and bring a second draft to an upcoming meeting, either April or May. SE 2nd.

Discussion:

SH disagreed; Policy Subcommittee's current focus on Subcommittee structure, stipulating each Subcommittee's charge; suggested SE and other member work more broadly on website – e.g., posting minutes.

SE: Intent was "marketing," clarifying info for parents, community.

WM: Concern that GPS website is not within City's website and not included in City's liability coverage.

Motion passed 4-1 (No: SH)

D. Filling of Vacant Seat

Don Alexander has resigned. AN thanked him for his service; reviewed relevant policies and Committee's recent past practice which included statement/interview with applicants.

Appointment to serve approx. 8 months until election in November as 2-year seat (to complete DA's term).

AN moved that the Greenfield School Committee accept letters of interest until the end of the day Monday, April 1. SH 2nd.

WM reminded that to be on ballot in November must take out papers in April.

Prefer letters submitted via email.

Motion passed unanimously.

SH moved that Superintendent post a public notice of the 8-month School Committee opening with the needed information for applying. WM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

AN moved to invite individuals who have submitted letters of interest to the Committee to attend our April regular meeting, provide a 2-minute-maximum statement, and be prepared to potentially answer questions from Committee members. KC 2nd.

AN noted that she has received two letters of interest so far.

Motion passed unanimously.

SH moved that applications be provided to School Committee in a packet and not individually as they arrive. SE 2nd. Motion failed 1-4.

Consensus for AN to forward applications to members as they are received. Full packet to be provided after April 1 deadline.

AN moved to clarify that the intent is to select a new member at the April regular meeting, barring any unforeseen circumstances or interests of the Committee. SH 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Proposed Interim Subcommittee Leadership Due to Vacant Seat

Don Alexander chairs Policy Subcommittee and Personnel & Collective Bargaining Subcommittee.

AN moved to support interim chairperson positions of Member Eckstrom as chair of Personnel and Collective Bargaining Subcommittee and Member Caron as chair of Policy Subcommittee until any further subcommittee reconfiguration may occur with new member. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Civics Update

GHS Principal Karin Patenaude will present GHS Civics update at April meeting.

G. Superintendent Evaluation Mid-Cycle

JH reviewed 5 goals which were voted mid-November; in last four months, primary focus has been on FY20 budget. Noted that work of school district goes in cycles, not divided evenly throughout year, e.g., hiring, grants, evaluation. Provides monthly reports listing activities related to each goal.

- Positive role in community: well underway, continuing. Partnerships, connections; highlights role as President of Connecticut Valley Superintendents' Roundtable; includes cost-savings, media, active involvement throughout City
- Aligned curriculum and student outcomes, with emphasis on GMS turnaround work: ongoing. Request to bring presentation to School Committee in April.
- Maintain and support strong elective program including foreign language, integrated arts: elective program focus during budget preparation.
- Make known achievements of schools' achievements and under-recognized programs (e.g., GMS equestrian program, service learning): Seeks support of School Committee
- Work environment and staff support, including negotiating contracts: on-going. Includes recruiting well-qualified employees (e.g., transportation staff). Seeks support of School Committee to prioritize student learning in setting agenda, Committee's focus.
- Physically and emotionally safe learning environments: met and on-going. E.g., First Aid training, school safety and emergency planning, regional planning; work with Director of Pupil Services for academic, emotional support for students, especially re: Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Support School Committee's key initiatives – underway, moving forward. Includes updating all School Committee Policies; School Committee secretary.

Discussion:

- Highlighting schools:
 - GMS student reports to begin at April meeting.
 - Attention to Four Corners: Highlight other elementary schools
 - Equality: look at funding given to different schools.
- Clear report. Acknowledged volume of work by Superintendent, including Green River program.
- Curriculum Director position unfilled for a long time. Another round of interviews next week. Teachers, administrators on interview panel. Challenge to find qualified applicants with pre-K to 12 experience, knowledge of state standards.
- Intradistrict choice-in (neighborhood schools)
- Choice seats to be discussed, voted at upcoming meeting.
- Regional partnerships with neighboring districts important but would require re-ordering Superintendent's priorities. Consider Greenfield joining conversations happening now between region's school committees.

H. Committee and Superintendent Response to Public Input

Discussion:

- AN: Intent to consider public comment at meetings and via emails and other ways. Reviewed GPS policies related to public input. MASC recommends not responding to public comments at meeting, especially those not pertaining to agenda items, to avoid Open Meeting Law violations. Limiting public comments to agenda items only would allow members to respond at meeting.
- SH: No intent for members to respond immediately to public comments at meetings. Concern is for consistent, fair practice of responding and clarity on who responds.

- AN: School Committee spokesperson is Chair. GPS spokesperson is Superintendent. MASC recommends emailed comments be brought to next School Committee meeting; appropriate response: *Thank you. Committee will receive copy of your comment.* Superintendent could provide clarification. Chair could forward emails to Superintendent for action, cc: sender.
- Complaints policy directs handling at lowest level possible. Complaints sent to individual members or full Committee re: district matters to be forwarded to Superintendent, who then directs them to appropriate person.
- SE: Concerns about limiting public comment to only what's on agenda. Some topics are timely, not to be delayed.
- JH: These policies are being reviewed now in Policy Subcommittee. Supt nearly always responds with *Thank you* and provides clarification if warranted. Recommends discussion in Subcommittee as part of their process.
- WM: Disagrees with limiting to agenda items only. Other school committees revising MASC-template policy to avoid restricting free speech.
- JH: Suggests getting legal input, considering ACLU action and free speech.

AN moved to have the Policy Subcommittee take a more in-depth look at public comment policy and potential response, and also request legal input to support that conversation. KC 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

SH requested Subcommittee clarify how to respond to in-meeting public comments.

VI. New Business – None

VIII. Executive Session

AN announced intent to move into Executive Session in accordance with MGL c 30A, §21, (3) & (10): 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 (Unit C).

WM moved to enter Executive Session. 2nd KC. Roll call vote: No – SH, WM, KC, SE. Yes – AN. Motion defeated to allow discussion of skipped-over agenda item, New Agenda Items.

VII. New Agenda Items

SH offered three requests:

- School Committee Secretary
 - SH moved to revisit our votes in July about School Committee Secretary to take subcommittee minutes. Motion failed for lack of second.
- Discussion of School Committee goals: AN clarified has already been voted on.
- Paving of basketball courts at elementary schools
 - Paving is in the capital budget; Conservation Commission discussed at recent meeting. At Newton, PTO funding and additional grant to support paving.
 - SH moved to refer outdoor basketball surfaces issue to Health Safety and Facilities Subcommittees. Motion failed for lack of second.

VIII. Executive Session

AN moved to enter Executive Session. 2nd SE. Roll call vote: Yes – SH, WM, AN, SE. Entered Executive Session at 9:26 p.m.

Motion to leave Executive Session. 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes – SH, WM, AN, SE. Returned to public session at 9:33 p.m.

IX. Adjournment

SE moved to adjourn, 2nd WM. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

1. Posting, Agenda and Timed Agenda March 13, 2019
2. Draft minutes: February 13, February 25, March 7, 2019
3. Superintendent's Report documents
 - a. Flyers: AEL Open House, GPS Film Festival
 - b. *Recorder* articles re: GHS basketball, hockey
 - c. School newsletters
 - d. Social media from Superintendent
4. Budget Reports as of March 11 from Steve Nembirkow, Business Manager
5. Draft GPS 2019-202 Calendar
6. Draft text for gpsk12.org website re: School Committee
7. Policies:
 - a. BBBC School Committee Voluntary Resignation
 - b. BBBE Unexpired Term Fulfillment
 - c. KE-E Public Complaints
 - d. BEDH Public Participation at School Committee Meetings
 - e. BEE Special Procedures for Conducting Hearings
 - f. KA and KA-1 School-Community Relations Goals
 - g. KBA School/Parent Relations Goals
 - h. KCB Community Involvement in Decision-Making
 - i. KDB Public's Right to Know
 - j. KDD News Media Relations / News Releases
 - k. KE Public Complaints
 - l. KEB and KEB-R Public Complaints about School Personnel
 - m. KEC Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials
8. Superintendent's Performance Goals
9. Emails, Adrienne Nunez to Liz LaFond, MASC, Feb. 1, re: responding to public comment and constituent emails
10. Email from Mayor Martin to Adrienne Nunez, March 8, with forwarded email from Wilfried Voss, March 8, "Continued and tolerated violence among students at GMS."