

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, March 8, 2023**
Jon Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant St., Greenfield MA

Present: Elizabeth Deneve (ED); Susan Eckstrom (SE); Glenn Johnson-Mussad; (GJM); Kathryn Martini (KM); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Absent: None

Also present: Christine DeBarge, Superintendent; Karin Patenaude, Assistant Superintendent; other school staff, & citizens.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (ED, SE, GJM, KM, AP, JW, RW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ED made a motion to change the order of agenda, to move II. Budget Update to follow administrative reports; and then Approval of Minutes, Public Comment, and Report of Student Reps, followed by Homeschool Policy and Follow-up Discussion on Re-Envisioning School Facilities. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

II. Approval of Minutes

ED moved to approve draft minutes of February 8, 2023. JW 2nd. Motion passed 5-0-2 (abstain: RW, SE).

III. Public Comment

Jesus Leyva, Greenfield, invited all to Franklin County CPR's forum on March 14, 7pm on state's role in local education funding.

Speaking on the topic of allowing homeschool students to participate in GPS sports/extracurricular activities: Michael Mastrototaro, Michael Pierce, Sean Pierce, Luca Siano, Jackson Campbell, Coach Tom Suchanek

Speaking on the topic of the redistricting plan: Alex Wenger, Jacki Pinger, Marguerite Rancourt, Wahab Minhas, Rachel Sautter, Melissa Webb

Speaking on both topics: Lukas Martin, Paula Lavoine, Tara Cloutier, Rachel Mason, Anna McBean, Sarah Rashad

IV. Reports

A. Student Representatives

L.G. and T.T. reported on GHS Student Council & club activities, conclusion of winter sports, start of spring sports.

V. Business

A. Homeschool policy

ED made a motion, on an emergency basis on a first reading, to amend the existing Policy IHBG Home Schooling, as presented. RW 2nd.

Regarding extracurricular participation: A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access for participation in extracurricular activities, within parameters set by the Superintendent.

Discussion:

- Clarified “within parameters set by the Superintendent” is routine, such as confirming that student is a Greenfield resident & has met any medical or other requirements.
- Suggestion to keep data on number of homeschool student athletes, any additional cost or liability.
- In 2022, concerns re: homeschool students allowed to attend school-day classes led to broad-brush prohibition of homeschool students from sports.
- Support for allowing homeschool students to participate in extracurriculars. Gratitude for community’s positive outreach to School Committee on this issue.

Motion passed unanimously.

B. Re-Envisioning School Facilities (redistricting)

AP: This is ongoing process of change; important guidance from NESDEC report; Open Meeting Law allowed maximum of 3 members to attend information-gathering meetings; challenges of transportation cost/logistics & condition of Green River building; not limited to 4 options, open to other configurations; priorities of equity & access.

Dr. DeBarge provided preliminary report:

- Cost to open Green River School includes \$1million heating system, \$24K phone upgrade; costs for technology, playground, etc. Researching implications of closing Green River: Would we be required to pay back state MSBA funding?
- Transportation: Research underway. Option 1 would add 10 minutes to drop-off time, 10 minutes to dismissal time, extending workday for supervising staff. Likely need to hire crossing guard, bus monitor. Suggests review of current transportation policies.

Discussion:

- Priorities: equitable education available to every child; moving 5th grade back to elementary, 8th grade back to middle school.
- How/when to get input from teachers
- Need to understand which options are actually feasible. Reluctant to spend \$25K for architectural/engineering review per school.
- City’s debt level: GHS, library, fire station. “Get on the list” for state \$ for elementary school?
- Option to build one elementary school will take years; want to enact solution, equity for students now.
- Suggestion to present details to public on Green River School, vote whether to remove Green River from consideration.
- Suggestion to create punch list/timeline to share with public on website.

KM moved to charge the redistricting committee with continued conversation on next steps, to include a draft timeline. ED 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Reports *continued*

B. Administration Reports

1. Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Karin Patenaude summarized recent work including professional development; high school math curricula; grant-funded projects; UMass interns. *(Details in written report.)*

Discussion:

- Not unusual to have different curriculum programs in elementary/middle/high.
- Science curriculum will be next review
- Need for clearer communication about School Counsel meetings

2. Superintendent

Dr. DeBarge presented recent work, including full review of website; new administrators hired (IT Director, Director of Early Childhood); strategic planning; FY24 budget; state funding for education; Federal Street School student data. *(Details in written report.)*

Budget hearing on weekday (March 10) due to missed deadline for planned March 2 hearing. Recording will be available.

3. Budget Update

Dr. DeBarge provided budget summary:

- On target with spending plan for remainder of fiscal year
- Unallocated funds balance is reduced by \$120K due to unanticipated special education costs
- Doing purchase order review
- Revolving accounts are anticipating 4th quarter revenue

C. School Committee Reports

RW moved to only have report from Budget Subcommittee. JW 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

A. Budget Subcommittee (SE)

Recommending no changes to Superintendent's Budget prior to presentation.

V. Business *continued*

C. School Choice Seats for the 2023-2024 school year

Dr. DeBarge presented proposed offering of School Choice seats, based on principals' recommendations.

JW moved to add 33 Choice Seats in addition to those still open from School Year 22-23 and those currently filled. KM 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Surplus

1. Library books at GMS, Library books at AEL

KM moved to consider as consent items. ED 2nd. Motion [declare as surplus] passed unanimously.

2. Aquarium equipment

GJM moved to declare the aquarium in Central Office as surplus property. ED 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. New Agenda Items

Agreement to schedule "heavy topics" early on agenda for April meeting.
Suggestion to use consent agenda. GJM will provide model of wording.

VII. Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a) (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; (4) To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto; (7): to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements (approval of executive session minutes from February 8, 2023 meeting). The committee will not return to Open Session.

KM moved to enter Executive Session. SE 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Entered Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. GJM moved to adjourn public session. 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

GJM moved to adjourn. AP 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m. out of executive session.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Materials

1. Agenda: March 8, 2023
2. Draft minutes: February 8, 2023
3. Superintendent's Update, March 8, 2023
4. Assistant Superintendent Update, March 8, 2023
5. Financial Reports, March 2, 2023
6. Library Weeding Lists
7. Aquarium Equipment Surplus List
8. Policy IHBG: Home Schooling (draft/revised)
9. School Choice Information