

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES: Wednesday, August 12, 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-Mussad; (GJ); Amy Proietti (AP); Jean Wall (JW); Roxann Wedegartner (RW)

Absent: None

Also present: Other school staff and members of the public.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (KC, SH, GJ, AP, JW, RW), Chair Proietti called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. Public Comment

Margaret Betts, Greenfield resident, former School Committee member and Easthampton teacher, encouraged School Committee to consider safety first and have remote-only start of school.

Susan Worgaftik, Greenfield resident, spoke in support of using School Resource Officer (SRO) funding for programs that support racial equity.

Karen Malley, ELL teacher at Federal Street, pointed to scheduling difficulty of having ELL students in both mainstream remote class and in-person ELL class.

Michael Sustick, Four Corners Kindergarten teacher, described special challenges of leading early childhood education remotely and asked for flexibility for families and clarity about schedule.

Pete Brown, Greenfield resident and parent, said he dislikes remote learning less than other options; urged staying with current plans despite new guidance from state; concerns that Chromebooks can't support Google Meet; supports reallocating SRO funding to diversity training.

Ashley Winn, GMS teacher, asked about details of remote school, including attendance, expectations, traditional instructions vs. independent worktime, outdoor in-person meetings; supports government funding for online learning.

Jaimye Bartak, Greenfield parent, noted low infection rates in Greenfield region, asked School Committee to support hybrid model; pointed to nearby schools returning to in-person.

Sarah Furgalack, Four Corners teacher, spoke to need for better technology and reliable equipment for teachers; her Chromebook isn't working.

Karen Malley to work with Chair Proietti re: communicating with Spanish-speaking families.

Victor Almida requested information on duration of remote learning and how schools would return from remote model.

III. Reports

A. Chair

- Explained government restrictions on School Committee meetings: required format, how Committee is allowed to accept public comments, and limits to Committee's responsibilities (e.g., not curriculum).
- Explained Greenfield's unique city-budget funding situation compared to neighboring regional districts. "If other districts can do X, why can't Greenfield?" Remote and possibly Remote-Plus are only options Greenfield can afford. Began fiscal year needing to cut \$1.8million from basic-needs budget; pandemic has added many expenses. No additional funding coming from state or federal government.

B. Superintendent

- Grateful for community participation. Encouraged all to read GREAT plan and documents on gpsk12.org.
- Situation is complex. No solution will work for everyone. Stressful for parents, teachers, front-line workers. Priority: what's best & safest for students

C. Subcommittees

1. Budget Subcommittee (SE)

SE reported on recent Subcommittee work:

- Discussed format of budget reports, consider limiting to MUNIS
- Acknowledgement that we can't afford in-person model. Chapter 70 funding inadequate; state budget will not be announced until October.
- AEL tuition changes

Discussion:

- Hybrid plan out of reach? Additional expenses would include \$1.5million for bussing, hiring half-time nurse for every school.
- Contracted cost to rent Blessed Sacrament parking lot has doubled, even though church construction has reduced parking space.

IV. Business

A. Fall 2020 Reopening Plans & Remote Learning Presentation

Supt. Harper described GREAT's extensive work; frequently changing guidance and data from state. Summarized three models: in-person, hybrid, remote and remote-plus. State requires plans for all models.

Pam Owen, lead school nurse, described complexity of interpreting health data. Noted limited capacity of local testing for Covid-19.

Remote schedules presented:

- Preschool, by Stephanie Parker, AEL teacher
- Elementary, by Eric Stone, Newton teacher.
- GMS, by Lynn Dole, GMS principal
- GHS, by Karin Patenaude, GHS principal

Katie Caron described remote-plus plan, which could gradually phase in services beginning with high-needs learners. Remote-plus options include providing supervised, physically distanced settings for students to engage in remote learning studies: GMS & GHS STREAMS programs, Early Essentials program for children of essential workers.

Discussion:

- Opportunity for GHS classes to start later to accommodate adolescents' needs
- What typical remote lesson/instruction might look like

- Students' attendance and attention
- Concerns re: limitations of Chromebooks
- Need for sequential reading/math skills
- Support for choices for parents, including ensuring online option
- Schools purchasing software, assessments, platforms

AP moved that the School Committee adopt the Remote/Remote Plus option to start the 2020-2021 academic year and affirm our other two plans for hybrid and in-person learning. SE 2nd.

Discussion:

- Suggestion for preschool option to evolve separately
- Difficulty of predicting phased timelines. Fully remote for first month. Have applied for waiver for first day of school to be Sept. 17 (not Sept. 16). Determine criteria to move to next phase. Need to consider more than infection rates.
- How to correctly adjust HVAC systems? Need engineering study? GPS blocked from moving forward with initial study due to state's limited approved-vendor list. Increased concern re: aerosolized transmission, less due to surfaces.
- Fall sports begin Sept. 16. Different levels based on contact – e.g., Level 1 = XC, golf, tennis; Level 4 = lacrosse, football.
- How to staff schools safely. Most remote-plus options include staff in buildings. Case-by-case arrangements for staff with documented medical concerns in consultation with legal counsel, union. Collective bargaining discussions. Finding substitutes will be challenge.
- Outdoor classrooms: renting tents Sept-Oct-Nov; purchased heavy-duty picnic tables.
- Options limited by safety, finances. Opening schools is not just "kids might get sick." Makes entire community at risk.

Roll call vote: YES – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed unanimously. [RW absent.]

AP moved that the School Committee adopt a plan for a schedule of meeting approximately every 2 weeks until such time as the GPS district is in a stable learning plan or our pandemic response is no longer required, whichever comes first. JW 2nd. YES: KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed unanimously.

GJ moved to change start time of full Committee meetings to 6 p.m. and to update relevant policy. SE 2nd. Roll call vote: YES – KC, SE, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's office to notify City of time change.

B. FY21 AEL Tuition

AP moved to accept the AEL tuition proposal requesting a 50% reduction in full-day and half-day tuition while remote learning is happening. SE 2nd.

Discussion:

- Request for budget impact figures, as was requested at most recent Budget Subcommittee meeting.
 - Andy Paquette, TMS, awaiting projected enrollment figures to prepare AEL budget.
 - AEL revolving account has \$63K as source to make up for reduction in tuition income
 - JH expects strong enrollment, with few families withdrawing from AEL
- Question why AEL staff not reduced due to change to remote learning
- 50% tuition reduction acknowledges that families aren't getting child-care services

- Consensus of strong value of preschool education for many reasons

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

C. FY20 & FY21 Budget Update & Staffing Recommendations

JH presented list of staff requested for immediate recall, recommended as necessary to start school year in remote plan.

Andy Paquette, TMS: Will be paid from Choice and Circuit Breaker revolving accounts. Unusual finances this summer necessitate creation of a revised budget, forthcoming.

GJ moved that Tier 1 positions listed in the Budget Report be authorized for rehire by the Superintendent or designee. JW 2nd.

Discussion:

- We are using next year’s reserves in revolving funds. Had anticipated \$499K in Choice at end of fiscal year; now projecting only \$200K remaining.
- How else to survive this extraordinary year? Can’t expect budgets to proceed as normal.
- Committee has approved remote plan; now must make plan possible by authorizing staff.
- Anticipate even more difficult state budget next year.

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

V. Executive Session - MGL c 30A, §21, (2) & (3): (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.

JW moved to enter Executive Session. 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SE, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed.

Moved into executive session at 10:35 p.m.

Returned to public session at 11:21 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

SE moved to adjourn. GJ 2nd. Roll call: Yes – KC, SH, GJ, AP, JW. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary

Meeting Documents

Budget Reports (August 10, 2020)

GPS Remote & Remote Plus Phased Plan

GREAT Presentation: GPS Remote & Remote Learning Plus Phased Plan

Academy of Early Learning Tuition Proposal (August 10, 2020)

Staff Positions for Recall